# Colossians

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**Colossians 1:1**
Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

## Frequently Occurring Words in the Book of Colossians

The Epistle to the Colossians (one of Paul's prison letters has thematic and repeated words to highlight key ideas like Christ's supremacy, unity in Him, and Christian living.
Top Frequently Occurring Substantive Words

- Christ — ~27 times (by far the most dominant, emphasizing Christ's centrality and preeminence).
- Lord — ~20–25 times (often referring to Jesus as Lord).
- All (or "every/everything") — ~30 times (a key emphasis on completeness and universality in Christ).
- Things — ~13 times (often in contexts like "all things" created/reconciled in Him).
- You/your — High frequency (personal address to the Colossians).
- Faith (and related: faithful) — Multiple times, tied to their growth.
- Love — Repeated in greetings and exhortations.
- Him/in Him/with Him — Phrases like "in Christ/Him" appear ~15–20 times, underscoring our union with Christ.

Why These Words Matter

- Christ-centered focus — The book combats false teachings by repeatedly affirming Christ's fullness, deity, and sufficiency (e.g., Col. 1:15–20; 2:9–10).
- "All/Every" emphasis — Paul stresses that all fullness is in Christ, all things are through Him, and believers do everything in His name (e.g., Col. 3:17).

These repetitions point to Colossians' core message:

- Christ is supreme, and believers are complete in Him
- live accordingly in unity, love, and gratitude.

Paul is an apostle and this gives him authority. Paul writes this Letter in his capacity as an apostle of Christ Jesus. ‘Apostle’ is a Greek word. The translators have not translated it because they had the impression that this word in the Bible has a somewhat different meaning than in general Greek. ‘Apostle’ literally means ‘missionary’ or ‘one who is sent’. In the Bible, by the Lord Jesus Himself. The idea is that the risen Lord Jesus appeared to certain people, and that the Risen One sent them out. Ultimately, He appeared to Paul (Acts 9). So he was sent, and by the Lord Jesus Himself.
This is why it is mentioned in the letterhead. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, has a message from the Head of the Church, for the Church. Paul had the need imposed upon him to do this work. He also did so wholeheartedly, as he describes extensively in verses 24 and 25. Timothy is the co-signatory and is called ‘the brother’ on this occasion. Not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. The term here means ‘co-heir’, ‘fellow fighter’, and ‘fellow worker’. That is actually the true meaning of the

word ‘brother’. When Paul himself writes to Timothy, he does not write to his brother, but to ‘his child’. The translators have made it ‘son’, but the original text really says ‘child’, both in 1 and in 2 Timothy.

**Colossians 1:2**
To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
‘and the Lord Jesus Christ’ probably should not be there. I think it has crept in, namely copied from another Letter, which does begin that way. In a new translation, you won't find it. It makes no difference to me, because everything that comes from God, our Father, comes to us in any case through or via the Lord Jesus Christ.
The dative form ‘the’ we no longer use, but it means ‘to the saints and faithful brethren’. These are brethren in Christ, of course, and for the occasion, they are in Colosse, but that is a secondary matter. Brethren in Christ have the same faith and on that basis have received a share in the same callings, blessings, or salvation. All believers are ‘brethren’—including the women—and furthermore, all believers are holy. They have been set apart by God for service to God. Even if one does not live a holy life, even if one does not serve the Lord in practice, even if one is a child of God and pays no attention to it, one is still holy. How one is, is different from what one is. You must first know who you are, and what your position is, and therefore what your calling is, because that is the same thing. And then one should walk ‘worthy of the calling with which one has been called’ (Ephesians 4:1). We are believers, we have been sanctified, and that brings consequences. Nobility obliges.
The name ‘Colosse’ contains the word ‘kolos’. The word ‘colossal’ means large, gigantic, monstrous. The latter is what it is, namely a monstrosity. Such a thing is called great misshapen growth. That is the background, as appears from the rest of the Letter. The idea is that these Colossians were believers, but tended to live as believers from a highly developed human philosophy and principles of the world. These are the terms used in chapter 2. This creates a monster. Then you have something like in the days of Noah, where earthly and heavenly things were mixed up. What came out of it was indeed monstrous, misshapen and colossal. Things of the old and of the new world, things of the devil, and thus of darkness, and things of God and thus of the light, should not be mixed with each other. We live on the border of those two worlds. We live within both worlds. But when we speak of biblical truth, and all that is connected with it, we should keep that strictly separate from all so-called human philosophy.
‘Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father.’ The Greeks wish each other grace, and the Jews wish each other peace, ‘shalom’. Paul combines both greetings, because in the Church, Jew and Greek are united into one Body. Grace is one of the terms in the Old Testament to indicate the New Covenant. Peace is also characteristic of the New Covenant, and the term ‘peace’ in the Old Testament is often the designation of that entire New Covenant. When the Lord says: ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you’ (John 14:27), what does the Lord give us? The New Covenant. You can wish each other grace and peace, but in practice, little comes of it, unless that grace and peace come from God.

**Colossians 1:3**
We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Actually, it says: ‘we thank the God-Father.’ But ‘God-Father’ is such a strange word in some languages that it is not translated that way, but it is really there. The God, Father, and the translators have made it, the God and Father. That is also what it is, but here the word ‘and’ is not even in between. That is a figure of speech, which is called an ‘apposition’. Then two words are placed next to each other, as in Romans 8:23. There is talk of our ‘appointment to sons’ and the King James Version says: ‘namely, the redemption of our body.’ But it says ‘our appointment to sons, the redemption of our body,’ because those two things are the same. That is also the case here in Colossians 1:3. ‘We give thanks to the God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The problem with this expression is that the meaning is never understood, for the simple reason that one then thinks it says: God namely the Father, to distinguish from God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God, namely the first person of a triune God. That is how one reads it, and that is clear, but that is not the meaning. Such a thing does not exist in the Bible at all, by the way. The idea is that ‘father’ has the meaning of ‘testator’, when it is contrasted with ‘son’, the ‘heir’. The term ‘father’ always contains the ‘giver’. The father is the giver, the origin of things, just as the son is the receiver of things.
One of the reasons why I regularly come back to that issue of the trinity is that the Son in the Bible, also the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Son because he is subject to, subordinate to, and subservient to the Father. That whole line of thought is in conflict with the official doctrine of the trinity. That says: the Father and Son are on an absolutely equal level. The one is not above the other. However, that idea is unbiblical. One neglects to see the obedience, subservience, and faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. What the Scripture expressly teaches us is that our salvation has come about precisely through the service, namely the obedience (Romans 5), the faith, and thus the faithfulness and subservience of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is biblical truth, which is not possible at all if one really believes that the Father and Son are on an absolutely equal level with regard to the Godhead. But that is not so. They are concepts that are in relation to each other. Father is the giver and the Son, in that relationship, is the receiver.
What is stated in verse 3 is that God is the one who gave His blessings to the one who is our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the giver, namely. We serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ serves His Father, namely God. And God, on the other hand, gives his promised blessings to Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus Christ passes those blessings on to us. That is the shortest description of the function of the Mediator between God and men. It is also the description of the function of Christ as Head of the Church. All blessings for the Body come via the Head. That is why all our senses are in our head. That is why our mouth is in our head…

**Colossians 1:4**
Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints,
Faith and Love: The Marks of True Fellowship
It is always presented as two things that, in practice, go hand in hand. If we truly believe in Christ Jesus—if we have genuinely placed our trust in Him—then we also hold love for all the saints: that is, for every other believer. John frames it the other way round in his First Epistle—at least on the surface. There, love for all the saints (and thus serving one

another) serves as proof of our faith in Christ. At its heart, this is about the fellowship we share with the Lord Jesus and, through Him, with each other.
That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3, KJV).
The biblical idea is straightforward: in essence—and thus in theory—we are connected to God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And through Him, we are linked to one another—to all who are similarly joined to God in Christ. But if this connection means nothing in daily life, it rings hollow, mere words on the page. It's not enough to grasp it in theory; we must live it out. And that's precisely the Apostle's point here.We start by acknowledging that unity, then step into it. It must shape our actions—that's the very aim of this Letter to the Colossians. Paul had heard 'of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints' (Colossians 1:4, KJV). Notably, it seems Paul had never visited Colossae before penning this. The book of Acts makes no mention of the place. Yet later, he reveals he learned of the church's state through Epaphras (from verse 7)—the beloved fellow servant—who brought back a full report.
Verse 5 ties straight back to verse 3:
For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel (Colossians 1:5, KJV).
We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you (Colossians 1:3, KJV).
This is no abstract praise; it's grounded in the real, vibrant life of the Colossian believers.

**Colossians 1:5**
The faith and love which spring from the hope laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.
In the end, it is not merely about maintaining unity. It is about an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:4, KJV). Here, it is described as 'the hope laid up for you'—that is, the hope (the expectation) reserved for you. This is the inheritance, the reward, the recompense, the glory—whatever name it may bear. All of it is hope stored up for us in heaven. In our daily lives, this hope finds expression in service to the Lord, and through that, service to the Church. Yet without its ultimate fulfilment in the age to come, such service would hold little lasting significance. That is the plain truth the Apostle declares here.
This hope was one the believers in Colossae had heard of before in the word of truth, even the gospel (Colossians 1:5). The Gospel's proclamation is that the life of the believer will yield eternal fruit—that it will bear positive, everlasting results. It is not a call to mere self-improvement or to becoming respectable members of society. No, the reward—the inheritance, the hope laid up for us in heaven—is woven into the very fabric of the Gospel that reached them. This is the 'word of truth', the message that is Truth itself, without admixture. Hope always looks forward. If it is a living hope, it shapes and permeates our present existence; it gives our lives true substance. You could scarcely condense the Bible's message to a believer more succinctly. What is promised to us as believers does not primarily concern our earthly days. It relates fully—100%—to that which shall be unveiled for us in the life to come. This Gospel—that steadfast hope—had reached the Colossian believers, and not even through the Apostle Paul himself.

**Colossians 1:6**
which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, (ESV)
In a mere span of about thirty-five years—generously reckoned, for I suspect it was even less—from the resurrection of Christ to the penning of this Epistle to the Colossians, the Gospel had been proclaimed in all the world. So it is plainly stated here; and since it stands in Holy Scripture, it is truth entire, whether our finite minds grasp it fully or no.I hold that in that very era—the time of the Acts of the Apostles—every nation heard the glad tidings, fulfilling the great commission which the Lord Jesus laid upon His disciples.
Thus, the Gospel—our salvation, the word of truth, the gospel of the grace of God—was heralded to the uttermost parts of the earth, ere the Lord, for a season, withdrew Himself from this present world.
The word of truth, the Gospel, bringeth forth fruit, and increaseth; as it doth also in you. The 'increaseth' betokens 'bringeth forth fruit' as well. Souls are won to faith; and so it was in Colossae. It bringeth forth fruit; it increaseth. This holds true across the whole world—and ever since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. For the fruit of God's Word springs forth only after one has received it, embraced it, and made it truly one's own.

**Colossians 1:7, 8**
As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit
That little word 'also' is absent in the original, yet the sense implies it. We may assume the church in Colossae was planted by Epaphras himself, who first carried the Gospel thither. Thus, the Colossians, as verse 7 declares, were instructed by this man whom Paul terms our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. All for the welfare of that Colossian assembly.
Epaphras, it seems, journeyed to Paul in his Roman imprisonment, bearing tidings of these matters—and doubtless of Epaphras's own labours and standing among them. With that, the Apostle presses on:

**Colossians 1:9–10**
For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.
In these verses, Paul first affirms that these Colossian saints have received the Word and, from that day forth, have borne fruit therein. Once believers have embraced the Truth, the divine intent is that it should fill them wholly. That it should swell and flourish within, fostering growth—and this is what verse 9 terms that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will. Not with mere human lore, philosophy, or worldly cunning, but with insight into God's will in its breadth.
The principle is that what we as believers have received must expand even as it was first engendered: through that self-same Word of God. There lies the fountain of all life; and

that Word sustains the new birth, first with milk and then with strong meat. Beyond this general knowing of God's purposes lies His particular will for each of us in our personal walk—though I draw that chiefly from:

Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

It begins with discerning the greater whole wherein we are to take our place; only then do we capture our appointed station therein. As for the oft-repeated claim, 'God has a plan for your life'—I confess it ever strikes me as a balm to the natural man's pride. Does God deem me of such consequence that He has drafted a bespoke scheme for my days? Let me be clear: I do believe God has a design for every life, yet it commences not with the individual but with His grand purpose for the world at large. If we elect to join that divine enterprise, then—yes—His will unfolds for us personally. Thus we prove what is that good, and acceptable… will of God in our own spheres.

When we engage in God's plan and labour, it must needs be in the work He is presently about. Mark that well. In these latter days, God wrought no direct dealings with the world—nor are we enlisted therein. Neither does He now move upon Israel, save through the preaching of the Gospel; and our part touches not their national fortunes, unless perchance in Jewish evangelism. All proclamation today aims at the edification of the Church alone. For the Gospel in this age targets not the world's conversion, but the Body's upbuilding. To that end, God has bestowed upon the Church some, evangelists (Ephesians 4:11)—not for earthly transformation, but for the Church's growth.

The Word ever bears fruit; it works its effect unerringly. We believers, then, must be full with the knowledge of God's will: Be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Heed especially that spiritual understanding. For such truths transcend the grasp of the carnal mind (Colossians 2:18, KJV). Biblical verities yield not to human philosophy—the Scriptures attest as much. Man, unaided, cannot plumb God's judgments, ways, or thoughts. What he requires is divine revelation—and that God has granted from the very beginning (John 1:1).

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:8–9

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts ().

One may know God's mind, but only by hearkening to His voice. This truth echoes through Scripture, notably in these New Testament epistles

Here in Colossians 1, the Apostle unfolds his intercession for the saints: that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Not to satisfy our curiosities or puff our intellects, but that ye might walk worthy of the Lord. Not worthy of men, of kin, of society, or of our little circles—but of the Lord Himself. If honour comes, let it be from God, not from mortals. How oft we crave the latter! It is bred in us with our mother's milk, and we scarce outgrow it. Yet we must walk worthy of the Lord, whatever the cost. Oft it means forfeiting men's applause—but will God honour us? Now, and pre-eminently hereafter as discussed in verses 12–13.

Such a walk worthy of the Lord is impossible apart from being first filled with the knowledge of His will and wisdom. Therein lies the bedrock of our practical Christian course. We must first know the Lord intimately, be filled with the knowledge of his will;

therefrom flows the worthy walk. Or, as elsewhere: worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Ephesians 4:1); or again, worthy of the gospel of Christ.
Unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. Bear fruit, then, in good deeds. These good works spring from the knowledge of His will. Later, in Colossians 3:16, Paul bids: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Such is the aim of all these New Testament letters.
Good works are the offspring of the indwelling Word; fruits of the Spirit's labour within us. They are works of faith, as sometimes styled. These good are those which glorify the Father. The first mention thereof—in Matthew 5:16—clarifies their nature:
Matthew 5:16
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
The final biblical nod to good works comes in 1 Peter 2:
1 Peter 2:12
Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (, KJV).Peter, of course, stood by when the Lord first voiced it in Matthew 5. Good works, then, are those through which God receives glory. Not deeds that win our vainglory—though no harm if men applaud—nor works prized by the world. These are not labours produced by us, but despite us. Not our doing, but God's working through or in us, wherein we then walk.
Ephesians 2:10
For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
We perform them not from compulsion, nor for worldly esteem (though that be no vice), but as the outflow of the indwelling Christ. They proceed from faith itself.

**Colossians 1:11**
Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joy;
How, then, are we strengthened with all might? Precisely from what has gone before. By being filled with the knowledge of His will. By walking worthy of the Lord. By bearing fruit in every good work. By increasing in the knowledge of God. Thus are we fortified with all might—by Him. For it is His glorious power that shall then be perfected in us. So it ever operates, yielding unto all patience and longsuffering with joy.
Around Easter, we are reminded anew that passion week of suffering. At other seasons, we reckon it as fervent zeal, abounding activity, even delight. Yet in both senses, it speaks of being seized by a greater force.
Longsuffering—that is, 'having a long courage'. If one is long courageous, one sustains the heart's resolve over many a weary season. Thus one endures, holding fast—and therein lies strength, the very notion here conveyed. Not our native vigour, but the power of God Himself, by which such courage is ours.
Joy, too, ties intimately to grace, and no less to the Gospel itself—the glad tidings, the good news of grace. These terms share a common root, and are bound together in Scripture's every weave. Where we truly know the Gospel, we taste that power of God. It bestows joy upon us in every strait—indeed, at all times (Philippians 4:4, KJV). And amid those trials, we render thanks unto the Father.

**Colossians 1:12**
Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
We thank the Father who has made us fit to receive our share of the inheritance of God's people, We are qualified to be partakers of the great Inheritance. We know that we will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. Colossians 3:24
Yet whether that inheritance, the reward we ought to receive shall truly be ours remains an open question.
Hebrews 12:1 bids: …and let us run with patience the race that is set before us (KJV). The Lord has stationed us at the mark, at the starting line of the race and hath endowed us with power to run it. But whether we run, that is very much in doubt. Run we must. The Scriptures leave no believer with excuse to withhold service from the Lord. Nay, the Bible teaches that every one of us—each saint—can serve Him, howsoever the manner. Inasmuch as we walk in the light, we serve the Lord. But inasmuch as we cleave to darkness rather than light, we serve Him not—nay, we serve the power of darkness.

**Colossians 1:13**
Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
God has placed us in the light. Our meetness springs from our position therein. We have access to that light, an opportunity to behold it. For without light, one cannot see; and thus, to walk therein. God hath opened our eyes, for we were blind and have received sight (John 9:15, 18, KJV).
John 9:39
The Lord Jesus came into the world for judgment, yet also to make the blind to see—and those who saw, blind.
God hath delivered us from the power (prince) of darkness. But whether we walk in the light—and so keep our eyes open—that remains the question. Do we wield that power of light? Do we live thereby? Therein lies the crux. Even among the born-again, many in practice tread the paths of darkness. They know not the Light—nay, will not behold it. Their responsibility it is; yet they stand without excuse, for God hath loosed us from the dominion of darkness. We must lay hold of that deliverance, that darkness (sin, law, death, the devil) hold not sway over us, but light prevail. Not the devil reign, but Christ.
1 Peter 2:9
But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.
God hath translated us into the kingdom of Christ, the Son of his love. We are of that realm. In truth, our tie runs deeper still: we are the firstfruits, the firstborn thereof. No mere subjects of Christ in His kingdom, we shall share in its rule. For we are the people's representation—an ecclesia, a church of firstborn, heirs of the birthright. Through the term Son (He who holds the birthright), we glimpse the full purport. As the Church, we shall be appointed sons with Him. For we were predestinated… unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself (Ephesians 1:5, KJV). Where Christ in heaven is named Son, we in heaven shall be named sons—as firstfruits of His kingdom, partakers in His governance.

The Son of his love bears a twofold sense. Of his love speaks of the Father's delight in that Son—a theme echoed oft in Scripture. Yet deeper layers lie herein. One points to David's name, Da-oed. 'This is my beloved Son' (Matthew 3:17, KJV)—which, rendered back to Hebrew, evokes that very phrase. In the Old Testament, it concerns the Servant; but the New Testament recasts him as Son, for the Servant is exalted to Sonship. The LORD spake of a king from David's house; through the prophets it was foretold: And David my servant shall be king over them (Ezekiel 37:24, KJV). Thus the nod to David and the Davidic covenant.
On the other hand, the Son of his love stands as synonym for firstborn Son—the heir, the sole, the unique one who claims the birthright. He to whom the kingdom falls by divine decree, ever predestined thereto. In the Lord Jesus Christ's case, from before the foundation of the world. He shall receive the kingdom.

**Colossians 1:14**
In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:
Insofar as 'we have redemption', and thereby 'the forgiveness of sins', is because we 'have been translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his love'. If we do not partake in the kingdom of Christ, then we do not have redemption, and thus also not forgiveness of sins. We have received a different position, as firstfruits of a New Creation, for that is what it amounts to. Become one plant with Christ and thereby partaking in his kingdom, as firstfruits, even firstborn. That is also approximately the gist of what now follows, in this chapter and in the rest of this Epistle. We HAVE that redemption. Not: we will someday be redeemed. That does not take away that there is still a future redemption, namely 'the redemption of our body', (Romans 8:23) but here it is spoken of the redemption in which we partake. Redeemed, in these verses, from the 'power of darkness'. And thereby, redeemed from the dominion, 'from principalities … against spiritual wickedness in high places'. (Ephesians 6:12) In the context of the Epistle to the Romans it is simply: redeemed from sin (which are not imputed to us), redeemed from death, redeemed from the law and placed under the direction of the Spirit of Christ.

**Colossians 1:15**
Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:
The Lord Jesus Christ, that beloved Son, is the 'image of the invisible God'. The kingdom is given to that Son, because He is the Only One among those sons of God who is the image of the invisible God, whom no one has ever seen. (John 1:18) The God whom no one can even see. (1 Timothy 6:16) But what did one see then in the Old Testament times? Moses, for example, for that is what it is about in John 1. Moses set against the Lord Jesus Christ. The mediator of the old covenant opposite the Mediator of the New Covenant. No one has ever seen God. 'The only begotten Son', (I myself believe that the word 'Son' is not in the original text) 'which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him', exalted Him. In Old Testament times one saw Jehovah, who is regarded as Angel, as Messenger of God. And thus he is called the 'Angel of Jehovah'. Simply translated as the 'Angel of the LORD'. But I always read that as 'the Angel', namely 'the LORD'. One thus saw Jehovah as the expression of the invisible God, but who is the image of the invisible God according to Colossians 1? Christ, the Son. Who is Jehovah then? The Son of God. In short, Jehovah is Christ. Note that what is said in Colossians is

commentary on who He is since His resurrection. Nothing is said about the time before that.
He is ‘the firstborn of every creature’, with reference to birthright, for that is what the term implies. He is the Firstborn of all creatures, for ‘creatures’ means ‘creations’. If He is the Firstborn among all creatures, then this implies that He Himself is a creation.. He is not only seen as ‘firstborn of every creature’, and thus as the most important creation there is, He is moreover emphatically called ‘the firstborn (firstfruit) of a New Creation’. The first Man of that New Humanity is a creature. Insofar as we as believers partake in Him, we are His workmanship. God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, who is our Head.

**Colossians 1:16**
For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
The One by whom all things were created that are in the heavens and on the earth, we know as Jesus, the Son of man, seated at the right hand of God.
Hebrews 1:8, 10
But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:
The colon after ‘and’ means: ‘to the Son he also says’, namely: ‘Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.’ In other words: the creation of the world is indeed attributed to the Son. That is difficult for the doctrine of the Trinity, for that says: I believe in God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth. Is that not true then? Yes, that is true. But I just as much believe in God the Son, the Creator of heaven and earth, for that stands just as much in the Bible. These words are said to the Lord, that is Jehovah. Here in this Scripture passage in Hebrews it is inferred to the LORD from the Old Testament. Jehovah from the Old Testament writings, is no one other than the One whom we now know as the Son. Both the Son, and also Jehovah, are regarded as expression, representation, of the Being of God. The idea is that that Son Jehovah is not only the visible representation of the Being of God, but also the One who ‘upholdeth all things by the word of His power’. (Hebrews 1:3) That is to say: He is in any case the expression of God’s Being and therefore he is the One who carries out the work of God. He is thus the ‘executor’, the ‘builder’. In Hebrew that is ‘ben’ and in our language that is ‘son’. Without someone who carries out the work, no work at all is done, and thus ‘all the work of God’ can be attributed to the Son. That is what Hebrews 1 says and therefore ‘by Him were all things created’, you cannot call that ‘Him’ Jesus or even Christ, but yes the Lord and He is now known as Jesus Christ, the appointed Son.
When it comes to creating the heavens and earth, it is about two heavens and one earth. Counting from the earth there is  irstly the heavens in which ‘the fowls of the air’ fly and thereafter the heaven in which ‘the stars of heaven’ stand. The one we call ‘the atmosphere’, the other we call ‘the universe’, although that is not the best word for it. The ‘stratosphere’ is considered more or less the boundary between these two heavens. One heaven is thereby left out of consideration: ‘the third heaven’.

2 Corinthians 12:2
I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.
That 'third heaven' is the spiritual world. It is indeed higher than the two heavens and the earth, but if you think that you have to go through those two heavens first to get to the third heaven, then you are mistaken. If you want to go to the second heaven, you have to go up, away from the earth, but if you want to go to the third heaven, you can simply stay here. We as believers are expected to be there. If you make a drawing of earth and two heavens, the heaven of heavens cannot be on it, because it is of a different nature. You cannot point out a place for it. The third heaven is called in the Old Testament 'the heaven of heavens', for example in:
Deuteronomy 10:14
Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.
The term 'heaven' is used for everything that is ABOVE the earth and the earth is the ground, not the planet, for the 'planet earth' does not exist at all. (See 'hollow earth' on the Vlichthus.nl website)
The 'heaven of heavens', where we already are, but also go to, does not form part of the creation and thus also not of a New Creation. That heaven has always been there, it is of a different nature, of a higher nature than this present world. Insofar as there is a New Creation, according to Isaiah 65:17 there will come 'new heavens and a new earth'. That third heaven simply remains, it does not change. The heaven of heavens forms part of the invisible world and was never created, but another part of the invisible world was indeed created. Heavens and earth are visible, but after that it says: 'by him were all things created …, whether they be thrones, or dominions'. Insofar as there are invisible creatures, they were created by Him. Thereafter, 'whether they be thrones, or dominions', whereby 'thrones' in Greek is higher than 'dominions'. The same applies to: 'whether they be principalities, or powers'. The principalities stand again above the powers. A certain hierarchy in the creation is indicated.
The visible things on earth are, in general terms, governed, or 'managed', by invisible powers. That is then called 'thrones, dominions, and powers'. Words to the same effect, we also read in Ephesians 1 and 6. In both cases the idea is that Christ takes a position far ABOVE all principalities and powers, thrones, dominions, and all names that are named. Insofar as those invisible heavenly powers exist, they were created by
Romans 11:36
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
In short: 'all things were created by him, and for him'. He has laid that down in His Plan, for it says 'of him'. All things that were created should serve Him. Quite a few of the notorious life questions can only be answered if one first realises that the things are not there for us, in any case that God is not there for us, but that the things, as they are, are there to serve God. That also applies to us personally. Here in Romans it is emphatically said that everything that lies between the origin and the destiny of the cosmos is also THROUGH Him. He also arranges that, thus verse 17.

**Colossians 1:17**
And he is before all things, and by him all things consist;

From the beginning of everything up to the final destiny, the Lord is throughout involved with the world.
Hebrews 1:2
Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;
God hath appointed him heir, son, firstborn according to Colossians 1. 'World' is 'age', 'ages' or 'aion'. The idea here is not that He is the Creator of the cosmos. He created it and thereafter did not leave it to chance, but He is involved with it; He gives direction to the worlds history. 'Aion' speaks not so much about the material world, but about the course of affairs in the world through time. God not only made the world, He also has a plan with it. In the expression 'by whom also he made the worlds' the outworking of that Plan is expressed. This 'plan of the ages' is called in Ephesians 3:11 '… the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord'.
Hebrews 11:3
Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.
This is not a statement about the work of creation as such, but the idea is that the things we see, as they are for example now, did not simply arise naturally from the things that were formerly seen. Modern physics assumes that the things we now see have arisen from the things that have always been seen. But what is precisely brought forward here, especially in the course of this chapter, is that God has indeed intervened in world history on occasion. Thereby things came into being that otherwise would absolutely not have come into being. For example, the formation of Israel. That people would never have existed if God had not brought it about.
God has, through the Lord Jesus Christ, through His Son, 'made the ages'. The great change of those 'ages', of which he speaks in this Epistle, is that through the death, resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus an end has come to that former time. To the Old Covenant of the law in particular. A new dispensation, even a New Creation, and thereby also a New Covenant has been brought about and thus the change. This means the coming of a new High Priest and a new priesthood. The Epistle to the Hebrews then speaks about that and therefore that expression about 'the age' stands already at the beginning of the Epistle.
The term 'before' in verse 17 does not speak of time or the order of things, but of rank, in the sense of 'higher than', and that on the basis that he is Jehovah. He is therefore first in rank. That appears from the explanation. For it says namely: 'by him all things consist' and that means: all things still stand through Him. That all things still stand is because He ensures that they remain standing. It is about, via 'consist', that it remains standing as one whole, as a collective. If no one were to hold things together, they would naturally fall apart. From His exalted position He sustains all things. Therefore I do not lie awake worrying about a hole in the ozone layer or something similar. Christ is higher than this world and He sustains it for His purpose. That is the basis of the exposition here.

**Colossians 1:18**
And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
In that highest position 'he is the head of the body, namely of the Church'. That is the same idea as in:

Ephesians 1:20-23
Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
The word 'head' means, at least from the Hebrew, 'first'. He is the first, the Head of the body and because of the mention of 'body' it is translated here as 'head'. Christ is exceedingly exalted, the Lord, who has been given to us as Head of the Church, of which only believers are members and that is further the content of the Epistle. What now applies to the Church, will in the future apply to the whole of creation.
'The firstborn from the dead' means that He is the Firstborn of a New Creation. He is thus the One with the greatest inheritance right and also the eldest. As 'Son of man' He is the Firstborn of Adam. On the other hand He is also 'Son of God'. 'Firstborn from the dead' is a limitation, namely to the New Creation. It points in the first place to His resurrection. In His resurrection He became Firstborn and thus the Highest. It does not say 'the firstborn from death', but 'from the dead' and that means 'from among the other dead'. Or in other words 'leaving behind the other dead'. The general Biblical idea is that the dead will rise on the 'last day' or 'at the last day'. (John 6:39, 40, 44, 54) However, the Man Jesus of Nazareth, who received the birthright, was raised first from the dead and thereby from among the other dead. The apostle Paul says among other things:
Philippians 3:11
If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.
'Resurect' in 'resurrection' should be 'out'. If you were to translate it completely correctly, it says 'out-resurrection from the dead', but I must add that it is not about a bodily resurrection here, but about a spiritual resurrection, a revival.

**Colossians 1:19**
For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;
'the Father' is printed in italics, so it does not really belong there. Grammatically it does belong, but it truly is not there. The translators have therefore inserted it, because they fear that we might lose the thread and perhaps that is indeed so. But that it is omitted, that is officially called an 'omission', an 'ellipsis', that is a 'figure of speech'. The idea is that the word 'father' is omitted, because it is not really important for the meaning of the verse, and to prevent the emphasis from lying on the father. For here in this verse it is namely not about the father, but about the Son. That the word 'father' has been inserted here is derived from verse 12: 'Giving thanks unto the Father …', but it is about the Son of that Father. It has always been the Father's intention that 'in him', the Son, that Firstborn, Christ, 'all fulness should dwell'. With this statement the Apostle anticipates some other statements in the next chapter. Or: he returns to this statement in chapter 2. With what would the Son be filled? The answer is simple enough: with the Father. But there is another expression for it: with the Godhead. The short version is this is: that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, was filled with the fulness of God, and thereby with the Being of God, and that on the occasion of His resurrection. Thereby He rose from the dead.
If it says 'it pleased (him) that in him all fulness should dwell', that assumes at least a time in which 'the fulness of the Father' did not dwell in him. If we then ask, but when was He then filled with that fulness? then that is stated in the preceding verses, which

we have now discussed. At His resurrection from the dead, then He was glorified, then He was exceedingly exalted and appointed Firstborn and thus the Son, for in practice that is completely the same.
'Dwell' has the meaning of 'remain'. In him dwells, and now remains forever, the fulness of the Godhead. He is thus filled with the fulness and thereby with the Being of God. Christ is 'the image of God' (2 Corinthians 4:4) and thus the manifestation. The word 'Person' is also very useful here. Christ is the Person of the Godhead, for there is but one Person of the Godhead. 'Person' is after all the outward aspect, from of old in all languages. I think that in modern English it is used in another sense, but He is the manifestation of the Godhead. One can thus also say that He 'is filled with the Godhead'. When God appears, Jesus of Nazareth appears. When God becomes visible, and it cannot happen, for God is the invisible God, according to the Old Testament, and therefore: when He becomes visible, He takes on a form, but since the resurrection of Christ that form is the Lord Jesus.
The idea is that that same fulness should also dwell in the Church. Peter says: 'it was the intention that we should become partakers of the divine nature'. (2 Peter 1:4) Or in other words: that we should be filled with the Word of God. Then verse 20, and the connection between those verses, can also be understood.

**Colossians 1:20**
And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.
If that fulness should dwell, not only in the person of the Lord Jesus, but in His whole Body, namely the Church, then that immediately explains why the Apostle in verses 20 through 23 and so on speaks about the Church, for that is what it is about. The truths that apply to the Lord Jesus Christ apply just as much to the Church. We were first at verse 19 and then it immediately switches from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, to the Church, but that is because the Church is simply the Body of Christ.
Verses 19 and 20 says in fact: 'It pleased (him) that in Him the fulness should dwell, and it also pleased (him) that he, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him, I say, should reconcile all things unto himself'. In other words: it pleased (him) that in him all fulness should dwell and it pleased (him) that through him all things should be reconciled to God, or unto God. That is the main idea here. First there is the expression of the Being of God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the One through whom the world should be reconciled to God.
2 Corinthians 5:19
To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
This is the outworking of the love of God. Unity is made. In our present world there is a great distance, or separation, between God and the world that has fallen away from God. But the work that God does, in and through Christ, is that He reconciles the world ('the all') to himself. The question is only, who will still be part of 'the all' at that time, for it is undoubtedly so that God reconciles 'the all' to himself, but not thereby everyone who has ever lived. That is another story. It is only said with it, that a moment comes, a time comes, in which the universe will be reconciled to God. For a simple reason,

namely that unbelief, and everything that stood in opposition to God, will then dissapear.
'All things' is in the Bible the term for 'heaven and earth'. He would reconcile all things unto himself, 'whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven'. Earth and heaven together is 'the all'. Those who in Philippians 2:10 are 'under the earth', are outside and do not belong to 'the all', just as little as 'the invisible things in heaven', where God dwells and where the Church has its position. 'Under the earth', outside therefore, is also a spiritual world, which is called 'hell', 'hades', that is the underworld. That which ends up outside this creation is not reconciled to God.
Old Testament believers who find themselves in the realm of the dead, for that is another Biblical term, are reconciled to God. They are believing, they will still be brought back—brought in—to the creation as such. And conversely, those who here on earth are unbelieving, are cast out, thrown down, into the same realm of the dead. Ultimately that is definitive. Then it is called 'the second death'. (Revelation 21:8) The third heaven is never spoken of, and no need to be reconciled to God. There are certain figures there, up to the present, who will still be cast out from there. Then they necessarily end up on the earth, (Revelation 12:7-9) for that is how it is in the Biblical worldview. Once the kingdom is established on earth, in the days of or after the return of Christ, they are then also removed from the earth and descend one floor lower. Permanently they are cast outside into 'the lake of fire'. (Revelation 20:10)
Philippians 2:10
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
Revelation 21:8
But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.
Revelation 12:7-9
And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
Revelation 20:10
And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

**Colossians 1:21, 22**
And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight:
We had 'a mind set on wicked works' but are now nevertheless also reconciled with Him. This is obviously said to the Gentiles, for Jews are considered to have a mind set on good works, namely the law. Gentiles, on the other hand, are considered to be unrighteous. There are quite a few Scripture passages where the term 'unrighteous' is used to designate 'Gentiles'. To distinguish them from the Jews, who after all are considered Jews because they have the law. We were 'sinners of the Gentiles'.

(Galatians 2:15) When Peter in Acts 2:23 says: '… ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain', then he means thereby the Gentiles, in that case the Romans. The word 'alienated' we also know from Ephesians 2:12, whereby we see that in Colossians 'the commonwealth of Israel' is not stated, but in Ephesians it is indeed, and that is evidently the idea.

Ephesians 2:12

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

The standard commentary on the verse is that something does not fit, for Gentiles are after all not 'alienated' from the commonwealth of Israel, because they never had it. And thus you must translate with: 'who formerly were aliens'. Aliens in the sense of foreigners, outsiders. Aliens 'from the covenants of promise', it would then say. I also adopted that story in the past. What exactly stands in the Greek? It says with great emphasis, without any doubt, 'alienated'. So that the question is: who are those Gentiles, who formerly had part in the commonwealth of Israel and later no more? There is really only one answer to that. Those are the ten tribes of Israel, for they were Gentiles. In the first place it is spoken about ten tribes of Israel, who have become alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, but who through faith in the King of Israel, namely the Messiah of Israel, still obtain part in 'the commonwealth of Israel'.

If we descend from the ten tribes of Israel, who by God's ordinance have become alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, if we come to the God of Israel and to the Messiah, the King of Israel, then at the same moment we suddenly receive the Israelite citizenship. Just as for example the Moabite Ruth received it, when she accepted the God of Israel and emphatically identified herself with the people of Israel. She said: '… thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'. (Ruth 1:16) She not only obtained part in the commonwealth of Israel, but could also successfully appeal to the Israelite legislation, in particular that of redemption. She even became one of the ancestresses of the Lord Jesus. The expression 'alienated from the commonwealth' is thus not so strange. Both in Ephesus and in Colossae, which lay only a few dozen kilometres apart, the believers were in the majority Gentiles (Celts, Gauls, Galatians) and this applied to them.

Ruth 1:16

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

They could still obtain part in what had been lost, simply through faith in the Lord Jesus. Colossians 1:21 says that man by nature has 'a mind set on wicked works'. Thereby one is an enemy of God. For it does not sit first of all in our works, but in our thinking. Our walk is also first of all our thinking, our mind, our thoughts.

1 John 5:19, 20

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

God has given us the understanding so that we might know Him, who is the Truth, the True One. Through 'a mind set on wicked works' one arrives only at lies. God has

reconciled us with Him ‘in the body of his flesh’. The idea is that body and flesh here are two words for precisely the same thing. The Body, or His Flesh. Or: His Flesh, namely His Body, for one of the meanings or applications of the word ‘flesh’ is simply that of ‘body’, also with regard to the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus. But also the mystical Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, namely the Church, that is also called Flesh. That is what it is about here, as later appears from verse 24.
He has reconciled us to God in the Body, namely in His Flesh, the ‘body of his flesh’, His Body therefore. Insofar as we form part of His Body, we are reconciled to God. That ‘through death’ means ‘through death’. It is thus not about the death of the Lord Jesus as the only cause for our reconciliation to God. That is a misunderstanding and not entirely true. We are reconciled to God through death; that is also what it says. In the Greek it stands here ‘dia’, and after that follows a genitive, a certain case form, and that simply means ‘through’ in the sense of ‘through it’. Death is not mentioned in this verse as the instrument that would reconcile us to God. That is the wrong reading. Then it should also stand differently in the Greek. It does not stand that way. It stands: ‘He hath reconciled us to God through death’. Even if you do not know that linguistic issue and only have the English, through careful reading you arrive at the conclusion that here it is about ‘through death’. The verse thus says: He hath now also ‘reconciled you in the body of his flesh’, through death, and thus He has made us members of His Body, of His Flesh. And that with a certain purpose, for that is the next point: ‘to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight’. For that we have by God’s ordinance been born again and reconciled to God in the body of his flesh. That is God’s intention. After which the question must be asked: are we then holy and unblameable and unreproveable presented before Him? Of course! For that is namely ‘the present work of Christ’. Not in His death and resurrection, but thereafter. The Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and that is after He had died and risen. That is that good work, in which God has begun and which He wants to complete in us ‘until the day of Jesus Christ’. (Philippians 1:6) For that work is not completed at our new birth. That good work is a work in which He cleanses us, or sanctifies us, for that is the same. He is still busy with that, that is His work. Our only responsibility is that we make ourselves available to Him for it. Or in other words, that we open ourselves to that Word. Want to come to know the Bible and therefore we do Bible study. In this way we give the Lord the opportunity to do His work in us.
Philippians 1:6
Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

> Philippians 2:12-15
> Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. 14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

‘The good work is the salvation of your walk, and the question is: Are we that which is described here in verse 15?
According to the foot-washing in John 13, we are clean, because we have once been entirely cleansed. Nevertheless, the feet are still soiled, but the Lord removes that by

washing our ‘feet’. He does that on His own initiative. It is His task and responsibility, but we should allow it to happen. It is about our being fundamentally reconciled with God and that no one Ephesians 5.
Ephesians 5:27
That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
The same thought we find in:
Titus 2:13-14
Who can bring accusation ‘against God's elect’. We should become ‘conformed to the image of his Son’. Be transformed ‘by the renewing of your mind’. The Lord Jesus has given Himself for the Church to present  blusameless and unaccusable, without spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind before Him, says the apostle Paul in
Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
And in:
Galatians 1:4
Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:
My question could also have been: have we been drawn out of the present evil age? We live in the age to come, but we still stand with our feet in the present age. In it we should, ‘denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, and godly,’ (Titus 2:12).

**Colossians 1:23**
If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;
Primarily, it was that we should be reconciled to God in His Body—whatever is needed afterwards, so that this work would still be carried out in us, is stated in verse 23. ‘If ye’ is then the condition on our side. That is allowing the Lord to wash the feet (John 13:8: If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me). The Lord Himself would do something on condition that we remain in the faith. That is what it always comes down to in the practice of a Christian's life, as Paul wrote to Timothy.2 Timothy 3:14-15
But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
Remain therefore with that Gospel that ye have heard—not in the sense that it was preached to you, but that ye have believed it. For that is what ‘hearing’ ordinarily means. We have once accepted the Word of God, and we should remain with it.
‘Grounded’, ‘settled’, ‘not moved away’—these are three times the same thing and speak of immovability. ‘Not moved away from’ means ‘not shifted from it’. In this case, ‘from the hope, namely the Gospel’. The Gospel speaks, after all, of coming things and thus gives us hope. That is the expectation that we have on the basis of the Gospel. What expectation? That of the salvation of the soul, for salvation as regards the spirit we already have. On the salvation of the soul—our practical life, our walk—it is being worked. Not by us, but by the Lord, and we make ourselves available for it.’(Which was)

preached to every creature which is under heaven' is the same thought as that of '(Which) is come unto you; as (it is) in all the world', in verse 6. The thought is repeated, namely that the Gospel was already preached in those days among all nations and that within a few decades. Of that same Gospel Paul has become a minister, he says himself.

**Colossians 1:24-25**
Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: 25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;
Paul's suffering is not endured for the world, nor for man in general, but for the believers and thus for the Church. In verse 25 we arrive at what the Apostle specifically mentions on occasion: 'My gospel', named in Romans 2:16; 16:25 and 2 Timothy 2:8. That is also the Gospel of Peter and the other apostles, and of me, because there is no other Gospel.
Being a minister brings suffering with it for Paul, for that is what he implies here. Some have made of it that Paul received the same marks of the nails in his hands and feet and in his side as the Lord Jesus. That is a fairly well-known story from Roman Catholic tradition. But that is of course untrue. Paul suffers and endures the same hindrances as the Lord Jesus. Everyone who is faithful to the Word of God will undergo that same suffering that the Lord Jesus underwent, because He was faithful to that Word of God and ministered it. Whoever wishes to serve God will be persecuted. 'Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.' (2 Timothy 3:12) That is what happens to me too, says Paul, but it is for the sake of 'his body, which is the church'. Paul is a minister of the Gospel and thereby a minister of the Church. He was not in the service of the Church, that is too strong an expression. He received no assignments from the Church and rendered no account to the Church. Paul served the Church, but he was in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
'Dispensation' means 'stewardship'. It is translated as 'household management'. Actually, 'dominion' is the better translation, via the Hebrew. The purport of the expression is clear. It is about the fact that the Lord has arranged something, that is to say, that God willed it so that Paul would do this work. Which is not to say that others would not do that. But it is nevertheless specifically Paul who is pushed forward to us in this position. He also says, 'Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me…'
This is his ministry, his responsibility, and another had nothing to do with it.
Then he says what the essence is of his ministry. I find it a splendid statement, because I come across it nowhere more concisely and clearly in the Bible. What namely did he have to do? To 'fulfil the Word of God'. (ministry). Paul would nevertheless add nothing to the Word of God. The thought is that the Scriptures, the Old Testament, were not yet transparent. That stands in the following verses, namely that what was written in the Old Testament was utterly unclear.

**Colossians 1:26-27**

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
In the Old Testament, many great truths were written down, but in such a way that they were not clear. Thereby it remained hidden during the time and the 'generations' of all the people in the Old Testament times. That period is called in Acts 17:30 'the times of this ignorance'. The truths were hidden in a veiled manner, in a cryptic manner. Parts of the Old Testament you can read, but you cannot do anything with them.
The ministry of the apostle Paul was to explain the things that were hidden—to remove the covering from them. Doctrinal truth, set forth in the New Testament, is in general not new, but derived from Old Testament statements. That is why the New Testament biblical writers refer abundantly to Old Testament Scripture passages. In most cases, that is also stated: 'As it is written', 'as the prophet hath said', or 'as it is also written in the second psalm' (Acts 13:33). I find that striking. In a few cases, it is not stated in the Old Testament, but it is nevertheless a literal quotation, without that being mentioned. It occurs everywhere in the New Testament and in particular in the Epistles of the apostle Paul, for even Church truth is derived from Old Testament statements. In many cases, symbolism is described in the Old Testament. If you read in Ephesians 2:20 'Jesus Christ (Himself) being the chief corner stone', it is not stated that it originated from the Old Testament. It is written in Psalm 118. If you do not have the New Testament, you must be very well versed in the Old Testament to understand that the 'stone which the builders refused' is the Messiah, who would initially be rejected by His people. From Psalm 2 we do not know what it refers to, if that is not explained in Acts 4 and 13. And there are many more passages.
The New Testament books are the fulfilment, or completion, of the Old Testament. All New Testament writings actually have but one purpose: to explain the Old Testament Scriptures in general and in particular those Scripture passages that are not clear. If one sees this principle once, then a great many Scripture passages suddenly become clear. Often we wonder, but why is it not simply stated? Why are there so many unclear passages in the Scripture? The answer is: either they are Old Testament statements and they are intentionally so designed, or they are New Testament statements, to be clarified. Problems arise when we start to philosophise about unclear passages in the Old Testament, because one needs to explain it.
'Riches of the glory' are in verse 27 synonyms. It is 'riches, namely glory'. That riches, that glory, is ultimately located in heavenly places that we received. The Apostle summarises our special dispensational truth we now enjoy. In these verses he does not speak of the heavenly position we now have. That was moreover covered in the first part of chapter 1, where the Church is associated with Christ Himself. Moreover, it comes up later in chapter 3. Here at the end of chapter 1 he specifically mentions the Church truth, in an earthly tone.'… which is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you …' it is not a loose statement. He takes a great run-up. Thereafter he mentions that mystery and then says that the glory, the riches thereof, is 'Christ in you'. Paul here does not speak of Christ being preached among the Gentiles, but that Christ is present amongst the Gentiles. It does not say 'among your believers', even though it is true. He says: 'Among, or in, the Gentiles'. That Greek 'in', here translated with 'in you', means in reality 'belonging to'. That is the only real meaning. And then it becomes an even stronger expression, for then Christ belongs to the Gentiles.

What it is about is that according to Old Testament standards, in any case since the calling of Israel out of Egypt, salvation for the world in general would come via the Messiah of Israel. First to Israel and via Israel to the nations. That is what you generally read in the Old Testament. But they—ultimately specifically the Jews—did not want that salvation and in our days salvation therefore goes to the Gentiles. It has been taken away from the Jews.
In the future, with the return of Christ, salvation will firstly go to the then believing Jewish people, the 2 tribes, beginning at Jerusalem and thereafter to the other part of Israel, the then believing 10 tribes. Via the united 12 tribes of Israel, in particular via 12,000 from each of twelve tribes of Israel (Revelation 7), it will then spread to all, then believing, nations.
Our hope of glory is invested in Christ Himself. We as believers need nothing and no one else than Christ. And insofar as we would know or understand, there is nothing else needed than coming to the knowledge of Christ Himself.

**Colossians 1:28**
Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:
Paul preaches Christ, who is the hope of glory. We are made aware of the things that were hidden in Old Testament times, because it specifically concerns the Church today. They are now revealed in the New Testament and it is essential to study them.
'Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom'. 'Warning and teaching' means 'encouraging and instructing'. Christ is preached to us. It is about our coming to know Him, particularly in the practice of our life. 'In all wisdom' and thus not in a certain (limited) wisdom, but 'the complete wisdom 'All wisdom' is Old English. It does not mean all wisdoms, but the whole wisdom. Singular, just like 'every spiritual blessing', in Ephesians 1:3, where it says 'all spiritual blessing'. We also know 'the whole truth', because there is but one and so there is but one wisdom. Upon closer inspection, that Truth and Wisdom are even identical, for with both you arrive at the Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom Paul says 'Whom we preach.'
The result is: 'That we may present every man perfect in Christ'. The name 'Jesus' at the end of the verse does not stand in the original text as far as I know. 'Perfect' is 'mature', 'fully grown'. 'That we may be mature'. That applies to 'every man' and in particular every believer. We are made perfect in Christ and need to mature. That is the purpose of the Word of God. the Apostle labours preaching of the whole Wisdom so we believers can digest and understand the mysteries of His working in us.

**Colossians 1:29**
Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.
Paul says indeed 'I labour', but that is indeed 'according to his working, which worketh in me mightily'. If we allow Him, then the Lord does His work in us, 'both to will and to do of his good pleasure'. (Philippians 2:13) Paul sets himself as an example. 'Labour' means that it is heavy work. It is likewise a strife. But all that with His power and that is simultaneously an example for all these Colossians.
Remarkable is that the word 'Spirit' does not occur in the Epistle to the Colossians. Therefore it is not a popular Book in the Pentecostal community. The point is of course the Spirit is 'Christ' or 'Christ in you', or 'the power'. In Ephesians 5:18: 'be filled with the

Spirit', is in Colossians 3:16: 'the word of Christ dwell in you richly'. In both cases it then continues with: 'Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord'. It is exactly the same exposition. The word 'Spirit' is totally avoided in Colossians, because it is a very elastic concept. It can easily be misunderstood, just like the word 'flesh'.
'Spirit' stands for 'invisible things' in general and in particular for the invisible God, or the invisible Christ, that can be. The Colossians had the tendency to theorize and thus the Apostle avoids the word Spirit. He uses concrete terms and simply says 'Christ', or 'the new man'. That is striking, because in the commentaries it is generally of the opinion that the highest Spiritual Truth is precisely and especially found in the Epistle to the Colossians 2.

**Colossians 2:1**
For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and (for) them at Laodicea, and (for) as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;
Paul writes that he has a 'great conflict' for the Colossians and also for those who are at Laodicea, that lay close to Colosse. It appears only that the Apostle had never yet been there. That stands in the rest of the sentence: 'namely as many as have not seen my face in the flesh'. All that labour that there is, also the conflict that there is, always has the purpose, for Paul, but also for ourselves, to come to the knowledge of Christ. We should namely come to know Christ. He would be preached and thereby we will be comforted.

**Colossians 2:2**
That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;
'Love' is 'coming together' and that 'to all the riches of the full assurance of understanding'. That expression, I sometimes think, you should learn by heart.
If you know this verse, you can no longer misuse Deuteronomy 29:29, which says: 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.' That text is used to say that we cannot understand something. But that is wrong, because what was still hidden at that time, God has since revealed. God simply reveals it! Humans do not have to figure it out for themselves. They should be humble and listen to it, instead of being arrogant by developing their own philosophy. In principle, philosophy comes from man himself and that human limitation does not get you far.
I often hear it said that religious things cannot be proven, but that's precisely the essence of religion. The magic of religion is precisely that you don't know so much for sure. And the moment someone thinks they can prove something from the Bible, then it's: no, you can't, because then we have a problem.
That's not how it should be. The essence of religion, after all, is that one accepts things against better judgement, without proof. But that is foolish! Not for religion, but as far as biblical faith is concerned. That is the reason why we are not religious. I'm certainly not, anyway. We have a faith, but it is not a religion. It is the opposite of it, but unfortunately no one knows that anymore and that has of course been taken care of. With faith, it is not about 'the magic of faith' and uncertain things, about mysticism, about doubt. Even

in some quite orthodox Christian circles, they tell you coldly that doubt is essential for the Christian faith. That's just beyond ridiculous! The essence of the Christian faith is precisely knowing for sure and that on the basis of proof, see for example Hebrews 11. 'The riches of the full assurance of understanding' is therefore not against better judgement, but simply better knowledge. From the Scriptures, namely, partly because the Scripture proves itself. That is in itself also enough proof. As long as you have no knowledge of the Scriptures, well then you also have no proof. But that applies to everything. If you hear about certain things for the first time, you don't know anything about it and you say: is that so or not? If you want to know, if you want to be certain about it, you have to study it further. That's also the case with the Bible. It might take some effort, but yes, if you want to be sure, which I have always wanted, then you have to be willing to do something for it. Afterwards it turns out that the Scripture, the Bible as a whole, proves itself.
We also have to deal with another misunderstanding: that you gain so little in life from things that are supposedly only for our intellect. That's another one of those modern fallacies that stems from the so-called modern sciences. And it's true, you don't get a damn thing from them. However, when it comes to the things we fill ourselves with, the things we learn and get to know, they become part of our thinking and therefore part of our lives and our actions from that moment on. That's what it's really all about. I'm very much aware that current education is focused on achieving a certain position or status in society. You have to be able to earn money with it, is always the idea. I prefer doing things that I enjoy, things that gives me satisfaction. For some, that's earning money and I see nothing wrong with that, but to think that's all there is to life, or that it's the only 'hobby' a person could have, is of course, foolishness. What it's about is just
What it is about is simply that the things that one learns are there so that man thereby would be formed, so that he could manage himself, not only in society, but with himself and in his own life. Society has very little to do with that in practice. Even if you are nothing in society, then you can still have a good life quite well and be happy. The opposite also exists and even occurs very much, namely people who make it in society and are deeply unhappy for themselves.
Knowledge of Christ does not make us a better member of society, does not help us in society. I do not believe a bit of it and I have countless examples of that. Even if you know the Lord, you cannot do anything with it in society. In this life in general absolutely nothing, I really mean that, but it is not for that either. What it is about is that the Word of God, that we come to know, would change us inwardly. Would change us in our mind, in our thinking, in our inner man. (Romans 12:2) Does that make us happy? Yes. Does that make us better people, and bring a better position in society? No, absolutely not. So: listen to the Word of God. Thereby we come to know and become mature. We then learn what life is really about. Thereby one is 'present(ed) … perfect in Christ', for that was the expression from chapter 1:28.

**Colossians 2:3**
In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
in Christ 'are all the treasures'. If you seek riches, treasures, valuable things, wisdom, namely knowledge, then you should seek that in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, (1 Corinthians 1:30) In Him that is hidden and therefore there is nothing outside of Him. That is what the Apostle sets forth in the following verses.

**Colossians 2:4**
And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.
Paul says the foregoing 'that no man should beguile you', and evidently it happens, with 'enticing words', or with 'motivating words'. Those enticing words 'have a shew'; they seem like something, but it is nothing.

**Colossians 2:5-6**
For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, (*so*) walk ye in him;
The word 'so' is italicised and can therefore be omitted. The idea behind 'so' is that people might indeed come to believe in and therefore accept 'Christ Jesus the Lord', but that afterwards they would have to follow all sorts of processes, be initiated into all sorts of matters, in order to reach maturity or perfection
Paul's take on this is: well, it's a nice story, but it's only a pretence, it only looks like something, it may also seem very impressive, but it doesn't mean anything. It can be compared to leaven. It only gets bigger, but not more or better, it gets more and more complicated, but the truthfulness does not increase. In fact, the more complicated it gets, the harder the Truth is to find.
'For though I am absent from you in body'. The Apostle says: I may not be with you physically, but I am in spirit. I see your circumstances, know what is going on and how things are with you and so I have one piece of advice: 'Walk in him'. It is the same thought the Apostle wrote to the Galatians. He asks them: how exactly were you saved? By the works of the law or by the Spirit? If it was by the Spirit, then walk in the Spirit! Do not add anything else to it, like the works of the law in the case of the Galatians, or human philosophy, in the case of the Colossians.

**Colossians 2:7**
Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.
Faith is the term for accepting and believing what God has spoken. That which we learn, through the Word of God, comes from God and enters our hearts. That is faith. Philosophy, on the other hand, is the exact opposite. As is religion, for that matter. A decent theologian has to spend half their time studying philosophy, but that comes from man and goes towards God, where man tries to offer something to God. Then it is called 'religion', and when man tries to offer something to other people, it is called 'philosophy'. A theologian is therefore, by definition, a philosopher, only they strive for something higher, towards God. This, however, is the opposite of faith. James says: 'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak…' Hearing is faith and speaking is philosophy from man to God. Furthermore, believing is not just believing that God exists, but believing that God has spoken and putting one's trust in that Word of God. 'Abounding in the same', in faith and with thanksgiving, and the correct meaning is also evident from that, because if one abounds in faith, then one abounds in the acceptance of what God has spoken and thus what God gives. We should live from that and the logical consequence is thanksgiving. The point is that we, who first received eternal life from God in this old body, in the old man, subsequently, on that basis, and as a logical

consequence thereof, make our body and thereby our entire practical life available to Him, because His Life is in us. In that sense, we can 'give our lives to Him'. We receive from the Lord that we may serve Him. We have an ability that is from God, made perfect in Christ, are priests 'according to the power of an endless life'. (Hebrews 7) Insofar as that works out in our lives, we do so with thanksgiving. And then it says:

**Colossians 2:8**
Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Do we still need to do something then? We are the property of Christ and we should not allow ourselves to be stolen to be the spoil of someone or something else. Is that even possible? Fundamentally, it isn't. We cannot lose our eternal inheritance. If that is true, it would not be eternal life. Eternal life is eternal life because it is incorruptible and that means you cannot lose it. But in the practice of life, in connection with our walk, you can certainly lose that, but that is down to us. That is directly related to our own choice and our own responsibility. On the basis of being 'taught and rooted and built up in Him', from verse 7, we are considered capable of ensuring that we are not carried away with other teachings, with philosophy, that is. With teachings that are not from God at all. THAT is our responsibility. If someone comes with other teachings, such as philosophy, which is called 'empty deceit', 'human tradition', 'according to the elemental spirits of the world' in the Bible, we have the responsibility to determine that it is indeed not in accordance with the Word of God. We then have the responsibility not to 'go along with it'. Philosophy always comes from man and sometimes from man from previous generations or even from thousands of years ago. It is the science that deals with searching for the meaning of existence from man or from visible things. It is thinking out what is best for man and how he should arrange his life for the best results.
We should love the Truth and practise the Truth and from that position we should ensure that 'no one seduces us with motives that have a semblance'. We do not need to know what the lies are, how they are put together and why they are lies. No, the point is that we should know and understand the Truth. Then so many fiery arrows can be shot at us, but it really doesn't matter at all, because we have the Scripture and we live from it.
The 'elemental spirits of the world' is the term used elsewhere to refer to the law. (Gal.4:3) 'Elemental' and 'spirits' together is a 'pleonasm'. I also think that the origin of philosophy in the Bible is found with the famous serpent in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3) He said that man, by his own strength, by his own thinking, by his own walk, by his own philosophy, or by the law, could ascend to a higher level. Law, philosophy and religion are all called 'the elemental spirits of the world'. They can all be traced back to that one philosophy, that one short reasoning of the serpent about 'eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and then you will be like God'. Of course, this was not the case and Adam and Eve, and also their descendants, should have eaten from that other tree, namely 'the tree of life', an image of grace, of the New Covenant. 'Knowledge of good and evil' is an image of the law in the broad sense and religion also falls under it. Religious people must adhere to certain laws and rules. The one is directly related to pride, which was invented by the devil himself when he says that man can reach the highest position with his own strength. The other is a matter of humility, because we submit to what God has spoken and live by His grace, that is, by what He

gives. It is about a very fundamental difference. Just as big a difference as between black and white. They are not alike; they are each other's opposite. In this way, religion and faith are two totally opposite concepts and certainly not identical, as many think.

**Colossians 2:9-10**
For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:
'Fullness' here means 'all'. The entire 'fullness of the Godhead' dwells in Christ, and there is nothing outside of that. You cannot say it more comprehensively than that, and therefore there should be no doubt about it. For if anything is doubted, it is the exalted position of Christ. The honour and glory with which he is crowned. That's just how it goes. The devil is always out for that. But the Bible says with great emphasis, particularly here, that the full Godhead dwells in him. The word 'dwells' in practice means 'remains', because 'dwelling' in the New Testament always has the meaning of 'remaining' and vice versa. It is our English word 'abide'. That is permanent, eternal. Nothing ever changes about that and that is what the verse is about.
In this verse, the emphasis is on the last word: 'bodily'. That is why it is the last word. You can also say: 'the fullness of the Godhead dwells in His Body'. The idea is that this Body is the Body of which you and I as believers, as children of God, are a part. That is simply in the next two words in verse 10. 'And you', which here means 'namely you', because it is the consequence of the preceding. The entire fullness of the Godhead dwells in that Body and you, who are members of that Body, are therefore, logically, made complete in Him. This is then explained in verse 11 and what follows.
Should we then not still be made perfect? Yes, and that is also stated in Ephesians and Philippians. We still need to be made perfect in soul and body, but we will never become that, that is absolutely impossible, unless we are first made perfect in spirit. That's where it starts. 'Let us go on to perfection', writes Paul in Hebrews 6:1.
In this context, it concerns two different things. The one is our new birth, through which we are made complete in Christ. The other is that we should then grow up, to still be made perfect, also in our practical life, 'in our walk' or 'in our soul'.
1: we should be made perfect in spirit.
2: we should be made perfect in soul (practical conduct of life).
3: we should be made perfect in body.
As regards the spirit we have become perfect when we came to faith and thus were born of the Spirit from God. As regards the body, point three:
Philippians 3:20-21
For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
Later we too can become perfect in body. Then we have 'a building from God, a perfect, lasting, eternal house in heaven' (2 Corinthians 5:1)
That is a description of what we call 'the rapture of the Church,' and it happens in a flash, 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye' (1 Corinthians 15:52). We shall be changed. Until that time, one thing remains for us: the perfection, or the sanctification, or the salvation—as you can call it—of the soul, our practical life, 'our walk.' That is a concern 'in the time that remains for us in the flesh' (1 Peter 4:2). During that time, God

would complete a work that He began when He caused us to be born again, ‘until the day of Jesus Christ’ (Philippians 1:6), and that is at the changing of our body (1 Corinthians 15:51). In the meantime, there would indeed be growth towards perfection, or ‘going on to perfection,’ as it can be called. But… how are we perfect in Him? The answer is given in verses 11 and 12. called. But … why are we complete in Him? The answer is given in verses 11 and 12.

**Colossians 2:11-12**
In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.
We are made complete in Him because we are one with Him. Furthermore, we are circumcised in Him and that's a little tricky, of course, for those who conflate baptism and circumcision. They say that circumcision replaced baptism; infant baptism is then the intention. The only argument I've ever read was that this is supposedly stated in Colossians 2:11 and 12. I have read it often, but I do not find it there. What I do read is that both baptism and circumcision depict the same thing. They are a symbol and therefore mean nothing in themselves. Does it represent something? Yes, but only in a figurative sense. It only has meaning because they are symbols that have no practical consequences or effects. They are a portrayal of something, in this case the same thing. A circumcision is a visible sign on the outside, in the flesh. It is, after all, called a circumcision ‘which is in the open’ (Romans 2:28). As for baptism, we know for ourselves that we have been baptised. Apart from that, it is not visible anywhere, and that is in keeping with the nature of our dispensation. It is about unseen things.
I have never understood from anyone what circumcision actually is. No one explains it. I'm trying to put it very politely. What circumcision is about is that the foreskin is removed. But during sexual intercourse, that foreskin disappears by itself and plays no significant role. Because the essence of removing the foreskin is that there is something else underneath and that becomes public. In reality, therefore, circumcision is not about something being removed, but about something showing. Something greater, because that's just how it is. At the moment of fertility, when new life is conceived, that foreskin is not there. It disappeared.
Circumcision must take place on the eighth day, and that is the start of something new. That is the first day of the new week. That is the day after the Sabbath. The eighth day is therefore a new beginning; the old has passed away, but that's not the point. The point is that everything has become new, because only when the old has passed away can the new appear. The same is the case with what circumcision is also a symbol of, namely the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The removal of the foreskin is the removal, the doing away with, of the old man, of ‘the covering’. The ‘tearing of the veil’ is the female version of the story. That is also symbolism. The death of the Lord Jesus corresponds to the removal of the foreskin, the removal of the old man, as is said later in this passage. In any case, His death is not the essence of it, but His resurrection. Life from the dead and that was on the eighth day, at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. What circumcision is really about is the appearance of new life. For that, something else must first go, the foreskin.

As for the people of Israel, God makes all kinds of promises to them, but figuratively speaking ‘the foreskin’ is not gone. The people had not yet been born again, and yet the LORD enters into a relationship with the people. As a sign of that covenant, they receive that circumcision. But Paul later says of it that it is a symbol, but that you gain nothing from it in itself. You should learn something from it, is the intention. For example, that the removal of the foreskin means the removal of the law. When Israel received the law, it was not circumcised, and circumcision was not requested. That only happened again when they had crossed the Jordan and arrived in the promised land, in Gilgal, because Israel had never been circumcised in the desert. But normally it was the sign of the covenant with Israel. Israel has only been an exceptional rule. Through Moses, circumcision was spoken of in a figurative sense. It was said that circumcision did not really have any meaning, but that it was about the figurative meaning. What does it represent?

Deuteronomy 10:16

Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.

In other words: throw all that opposition away. Cut it off. Their own notions, therefore, their own philosophy. Moses appeals to the sign of circumcision and says that it should actually be applied, instead of it only being a sign. We find something similar later in:

Deuteronomy 30:6

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Jeremiah 4:4

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Also in the New Testament we read about circumcision. The apostle Paul says quite a lot about it in Romans 2 and concludes this with:

Romans 2:29

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Paul says: it is not about a literal circumcision, but about a ‘circumcision of the heart’ and a circumcision ‘in the spirit’, namely a spiritual circumcision. Later he says about it:

Philippians 3:3

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

According to the law, there can be no circumcision, because the law is placed on the flesh, of which the foreskin is a symbol. As believers, we are expected to be circumcised, not so much because the old has been removed, but because we have received New Life. Eternal life. That becomes manifest when the foreskin has disappeared. We are circumcised with the true circumcision, in which not the foreskin, but ‘the body of the sins of the flesh’ (it actually says ‘body of the flesh’) has been removed and God no longer takes that into account.

Circumcision is instituted in the Old Testament. The first time it is mentioned is when Abraham is circumcised. That happens on the occasion that God promises Abraham a son. He was sterile, but he would become fertile. He would have a son. Reproduction, I mean figuratively, is ‘bearing fruit’. To be able to do that, the foreskin does have to go. That is illustrated in the sign. Abraham lived in the land of Canaan ‘at the oaks of Mamre,

which are near Hebron' (Genesis 13:18). The peculiarity of the oak, and therefore the acorn, is that it is a representation of the circumcised. For the acorn is one of those nuts, one of those fruits, which does have a husk around it, but only a small part of it. As if to say, you can see that the covering is supposed to be there, but it is not there in practice. That is an acorn, an image of God's promise and the revelation of new life. God takes into account that other thing that has been planted in us, namely the New Life that we have received. The crux of the argument is that we are perfect on the basis of the life that we have received. That life is perfect. The next question then is: and what do you have to do to develop that life? Nothing at all; you don't have to do anything. Just eat and drink, and the rest will happen by itself. That's what the Apostle writes to the Colossians. You are worrying, you think you still have to accomplish all sorts of things, but that's not the case at all; we are perfect in Him. The only thing necessary is that we feed ourselves with the Word of God. 'Set your minds on things above,' but that is in chapter 3:1 and 2.

'The circumcision of Christ' I find to be a magnificent expression. Note that it does not say: 'the circumcision of Jesus'. That was on the eighth day after His birth and that was a literal circumcision. The circumcision of Christ refers to His resurrection from the dead, in which He put off the old man and put on the New Man. We are therefore circumcised by 'the circumcision of Christ'. By the death and resurrection of Christ, because the old man has been done away with and we have received a New Life, a New Man. Then, the thrust of all those Epistles is, we should also learn to live with that, learn to deal with it. Set our own considerations aside and exchange them for the development of what the Lord Himself has planted in us. Verse 12 explains that this 'circumcision' stands for 'death and resurrection', because it says, 'Having been buried with him in baptism'. The word 'baptism' here does not stand for water baptism. It is possibly a reference to the ritual of baptism by immersion. It is called that here because 'baptism' in general does not even mean immersion, although that is a very good meaning, but 'identification with'. 'Becoming one with'. This Greek word for baptism, 'baptizo', has the meaning of immersing in water and then completely soaking with water. Like when you dip a sponge in water and when it is completely soaked, you take it out again. Baptizo is 'to soak'. That is actually the best translation and that immediately gets rid of sprinkling.

We find passages of Scripture where the word baptism is used, while evidently water baptism is not thought of at all, but 'baptism into Christ.' It ultimately amounts to the same thing, but the idea is that we have become one Plant with Christ, as it is called in Romans 6, that we have become one Body with Him, have received a share in Him, and are therefore considered to have died, been buried and raised with Him. That is all Romans 6, where it is also called baptism, without it being about water there. It is 'baptism into Christ' and 'baptism into death'.

Something that resembles baptism and should be considered and is also called as such, also existed in Old Testament times. It is called 'the washing' there and is still practised by the Jews today. It is a baptism that one administers to oneself. Not by sprinkling, but by immersion. A decent synagogue has a baptismal font. In it, you must cleanse yourself. That is a portrayal of the situation under the Old Covenant. But it doesn't work. You don't become clean from it. The baptism under the Old Covenant has to happen again and again, although there are a few exceptions to that. In Judaism, one baptises oneself. The Jews also knew this in the days of John the Baptist. But his baptism, because he administered it, meant that one allowed oneself to be baptised.

That is how it works under the New Covenant. What we cannot do ourselves, namely cleanse ourselves, we must have done by someone else.
1 Corinthians 10:1, 2
And I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;
That has absolutely nothing to do with water. The idea is that they were one with Moses, one with the cloud and one with the sea. And so they went through it, as a unity. They all shared in the blessings of Moses. With baptism, you should therefore not immediately think of water, because that is a very restricted application of the term.

**Colossians 2:13**
And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;
The 'foreskin' is a metaphor for the old man. 'He has made (us) alive together with him,' along with Christ, because we have, after all, been baptised into Christ and share in Christ. His death is our death, His resurrection is our resurrection, and the circumcision of Christ is therefore our circumcision. In this way, we, just like the Lord Jesus Christ, have become a new man. The Lord Jesus Himself has thereby become a new man, the Bible teaches. Thus, He would be the Head of a new humanity, which consists of just such people, namely those who have put off the old men, or who have died, as Adam, as the Adamic man, and who have thus been raised and have received new life from God.
Ephesians 2:4-6
But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus
The fact that we are born again is not an independent event but is part of the death and resurrection of Christ. Strictly speaking, we were born again when the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. We received it later, but our death and resurrection did not take place when we came to faith. We are 'made alive together with Christ.' Ephesians adds that it is by grace. God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead and thus also gave us that Life. That is once and for all.
1 Peter 1:3
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:
'Having forgiven you all trespasses,' says verse 13 of Colossians 2, for if the old man has been done away with, and we have become new men, perfect in Christ, then trespasses can no longer be imputed. If we are no longer that old man, 'according to the flesh,' because God has put that away, but new men with Christ, then we are no longer imputable, and that is in the true meaning of the word, in the juridical sense. Then our trespasses cannot be imputed to us.
Paul does not write here in Colossians 2 about man in general receiving the forgiveness of sins. He speaks about the death and resurrection of Christ and its effect on those who believe in it. Not about its effect on an unbeliever or an ignorant person. It is about us. The translators have rightly placed more emphasis on that 'you,' for that is precisely

what it is about. The idea is that we, who share in the raised Christ, will no longer live under the principles of the world and thus also not under the law but will live under the principles of the New Creation, of which we are a part. Within that framework, there is still forgiveness, for the sins of the believer—that is to say, in the old man—are not imputed to us by God. As regards the old man, we are definitively dead, and we have also lost all our rights.
The point is, and that is indeed what this is about, that we are children of God, made perfect in Christ, and therefore should serve God in a natural body, in a sinful body, for you need that, otherwise you cannot live here. To make that service possible, God does not impute to us the daily sins, whatever they are. The Lord cleanses us from them, and 'he cleanses us from an evil conscience' (Hebrews 10:22). All that is necessary for our service to the Lord, He performs for us, and the first is our cleansing.
2 Corinthians 5:15-17
And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
These things cannot be stated more strongly. The whole story is laid bare in a remarkable way.
There is often protest against that 'one died for all,' because people cannot imagine that such a thing is possible. The Bible teaches us, however, that the head of the family has the right to pay the family's debt, in all respects. That is 'the law of redemption.' The Lord Jesus is our Redeemer because He is the Head of humanity, not on the basis of His Deity, but on the basis that He is the direct Heir of Adam, via the biblical line Adam, Enos, and so forth, and via Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and so on. The title 'Son of man' (= Heir of Adam) has thus rightly come to the Lord Jesus. He thus had the right to take the debt of humanity upon Himself. That is completely in accordance with the law. Thereby we are redeemed from sin, from death, but also from the law. Those are the three things that are actually always mentioned in one breath.

**Colossians 2:14**
Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
Here it concerneth the Law specifically. This is of course a figure of speech, for there was not literally 'one handwriting that was blotted out.' That meaneth that the Law no longer hath authority. That it is fulfilled and therefore put away, or even annulled. Hebrews 7 saith: '… there is made of necessity a change also of the law.' This sentence alone should be decisive as an answer to the question of whether believers should live under the Law or not. Nay, therefore, for it is put away. But men allow themselves to be seduced by philosophy and say that man, sinful as he is, cannot do without a law and therefore hath a great need of standards and values, preferably those of the Mosaic Law. That is not correct, for that law only maketh things worse. What man needed is the most important standard there is, namely the example of life by faith that the Lord Jesus Christ gave. 'Eating of the tree of life' is what man should do and not 'eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' The latter came from the devil or from man. The misunderstanding is that people think that it stood in the midst of the garden, but that

was not so, because ‘the tree of life’ stood there (Genesis 2:9). That tree was to reign, and of it one should eat. And the whole of Biblical history is about nothing else than the New Covenant, of which that tree of life is an image. And so it is about the Mediator of the New Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ, who should be in the midst. He is on the highest throne of all, and so that is the midst.
The Jewish variant is that both trees grow on the same root. Upon closer inspection, that can also be a Christian variant, in which one confuseth both trees and doth not distinguish them from one another. People want to eat from both trees. Thus, they both stand in the midst… ‘Having nailed the same (the Law) to the cross’ is entirely correct figuratively. Through the death of the Lord Jesus, through His crucifixion, an end came to the dominion of the Law. And so, through His crucifixion, we are delivered from the Law. Everyone is delivered from the Law, including the Jews. Whether they are believers or not, they are delivered from the Law, from which we should subsequently no longer live. Believers not at all. And then immediately after:
There are quite a few wild stories about it, but as far as we know, that Law was gone long ago. The Ark of the Covenant, in which the ‘tables of stone’ (the Law) were located, had in any case already disappeared since the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but probably much earlier. That is more than 2,500 years ago. So it is said that in ‘the cave of Jeremiah,’ which one pointeth to as what one again pointeth to as Golgotha, the Ark is supposed to be. They would have seen and filmed it. But I have the impression from the Bible that the Ark hath completely disappeared and that it will no longer fulfil a function in the future either. Jeremiah 3:16: ‘And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.’ I do not think that Ark is anywhere. The Jews say that in the days of the return from Babylonian captivity, there was also no Ark of the Covenant in the temple.

**Colossians 2:15**
And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
The word ‘and’ is not there; that sentence continueth in one breath. Why is that? Because those principalities and powers preferably make use of the law, talking people into guilt and thereby keeping them under pressure and making them believe that with such guilt, they cannot go to God. That they must first live under the law and thereby be somewhat improved, for only then can you go to God. In this way, the devil maketh use of the law and holdeth man captive under ‘this ministration of death.’ Where we are delivered from the law, we are also delivered from the dominion of the principalities, powers, and therefore from the devil and his personnel. In Ephesians 6, they are mentioned more extensively.
Ephesians 1:21
Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.
Ephesians 6:12
For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

It is said in a very demeaning way in Colossians 2:15 that these principalities and powers have been ‘stripped’, or ‘put in their place’.
2 Samuel 10:4
So Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.
The defeated enemy was thus put to shame, and that is what also happened to the devil and his minions. They were publicly ‘paraded’ by Him. Made a fool of, which is why I speak of those figures with as little respect as possible. Christ completely and definitively defeated them in His resurrection, and it is in that victorious position that we now live.

**Colossians 2:16-17**
Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.
This is about laws, so the main idea is that because we have a share in the circumcision of Christ, we no longer live under the Law, nor under the power of the devil. The only explanation for that combination is, again, that the devil uses the law, among other things, to prevent people from coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why we had to be delivered from the Law, and that has also happened.
‘Meat and drink’, meaning food, stands in the Bible for ‘our complete life’. After all, the whole of life consists of food and drink, namely earning a living. Eating and drinking means that you consume something, and you do that all your life. Not only through the mouth (the meal), but also through the eyes and ears. All the experiences and impressions that we gather are described in the Bible as food and drink. When the Preacher says that we should eat our bread and drink wine with joy, it is not just about the meal, but about our complete life. The Law really interferes with all facets of life. When the Lord says: ‘I am the Bread of life’ (John 6:35, 48), this means that He is our life.
‘Or in respect of a feast’ means that reference is made to all sorts of other ordinances. In this case, on the calendar, in connection with ‘set feasts of the LORD’ (e.g. Leviticus 23:2). We also do not live under these, and we will, according to verse 17, understand this all the better if we realise that all these ordinances are ‘a shadow’, a foreshadowing of ‘things to come’. These are all things (including the emergence of the Church) that are connected with the New Covenant and have therefore been relevant for 2,000 years. We live in the things to come. It is also more or less the term we encounter in the letter to the Hebrews, particularly in:
Hebrews 3:5, 6
And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be spoken; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.
Moses was faithful in all his house, the people of Israel, as a servant. Christ is also faithful in all His house and we are that ‘house’. The difference is that Moses was a servant and Christ is Son over His own house. He is the Heir or Owner of it; that is the difference. Moses was faithful as a servant for a ‘testimony’, i.e. to testify of ‘the things which were afterwards to be spoken’. It was a testimony of things to come, things to come. Later, the same letter to the Hebrews says that the law is ‘a shadow of things to

come' (Hebrews 10:1). These are the things of the New Covenant ('heavenly things'; Hebrews 8:5). These are contrasted with the present things, or 'the present age', the Old Covenant, and that is darkness (shadow), when you see it in the light of the New Covenant.
In Colossians 2, the aforementioned Old Testament ordinances are portrayals of matters that have to do with the New Covenant and therefore also with the Church. In that Old Testament typology, you can find great truths related to the Church. 'The matter of the feast', all those 'set feasts of the LORD', but also every new moon, and therefore the first of the new month, was celebrated, just like the Sabbaths. All three are a symbol of the dawning of the New Covenant, and certain characteristics of the New Covenant. It is Sabbath, it is the Day of Atonement, it is the new moon, a new time, a new dispensation, the New Covenant, a New Creation. All those feasts in Israel speak of that. The ordinary food laws also, because foods are divided into unclean things, which are always a portrayal in one way or another of the things of the world, of the old covenant in particular. The clean things are always a portrayal of the New Covenant. The idea is that we do not live under these old things, but in their fulfilment. These things are in every possible way a thing of the past. The fact that we still learn about them in the Bible is because they are, as it were, monuments of the Word of God. They are portrayals of Biblical Truth, but for that reason, you do not have to observe them. It is sufficient that they are described in the Bible. We belong to Christ and share in Him. We are not subject to that Law and we should not place Christ under the Law by allowing ourselves as believers to be placed under the 'piety of the Law', while our life is Christ. We should, on the contrary, live the life of Christ and not be dominated by anything else.

**Colossians 2:18**
Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,
Piety always comes from other people. We let it be imposed on us, and that is why it says, 'Let no one therefore cheat you of your reward by a voluntary humility.' People are inclined to conform to the will of others. Within religious circles, that means conforming to the will of so-called 'leaders'. But we should not be dominated; that is the core of New Testament truth. If a person submits and thus allows himself to be dominated, he is, by definition, unhappy, because he is then limited in his possibilities, in his actions and sometimes also in his thoughts. This is how a person becomes frustrated when others set boundaries for him and say, 'Do this, do that, don't do this, and often also, you may or may not think this and that.' A person should be humble, should submit, should listen, but thereby he is bound. That is what the law does.
There are those who believe that they have themselves received new light directly from God. They have seen or perceived something themselves. Or they are convinced of something themselves, not hampered by any knowledge of the facts, and then try to impose that on others. The most pious variant is: the Lord has revealed to me that you... Or there is someone who says: the Lord has laid it on my heart that we should...
New Testament truth says that the Word of God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, should dwell in our hearts and that He should govern our lives. Not from the outside, not imposed as a yoke, but from within. That Word of God in us, that life of Christ becomes one with our life. They are not two things; it is one thing. It is not on the one hand living under the law and on the other hand being in Christ and living by His grace. Then you

always have a choice: should I do this now, or should I do that? The intention is precisely that it becomes one, under that one Head of verse 19.
The Lord Jesus Himself said to his disciples: 'You are all brothers,' also in the sense of being equal, and 'there is only One your Master' (Matthew 23:8-10) and Him we serve voluntarily. We should live by our own will, and if that will is not right, it is because we do not surrender to the Word of God, to the teaching that we receive from Him and should make our own. 'For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13).
'Entering into what he has not seen' in verse 18 means '... thinking he has seen.' The idea is that others want to subject us because they think they know better than we do. They think they have insight; they think they have seen things, but we should see for ourselves and live from that. We do not live from what others have seen, or from what others want, but from what we have seen ourselves. From our own will, which has been worked by God, for all that other stuff is called 'being puffed up'. Something seems bigger than it is, but it is essentially nothing. The search for power over others is called 'in vain' here, i.e., 'empty', 'hollow'. So 'in vain' and 'puffed up' mean the same thing twice.
Colossians says that we should increase in knowledge (Colossians 3:10). However, knowledge should not come from human thinking, 'from the understanding of his flesh'. That knowledge makes one puffed up. It looks like a lot, but it's nothing. We should therefore learn from Christ, in Whom alone 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Colossians 2:3). Apparently, the Colossians were suspected of being influenced by so-called Gnosticism or Gnostics, the philosophy that says that man, through all sorts of experiences, through study, through initiation, should come to knowledge of the higher things. This should apply especially to Christians. In reality, that is just religion, because one would, by one's own strength, in one way or another, possibly helped by our Lord, ascend to a higher level. That is what religion is.

**Colossians 2:19**
And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.
We should 'hold fast to the Head.' As members of this Body of Christ, we should orient ourselves to the Head and be receptive to it. In this way, the whole body, without exception, grows 'with divine growth.' Not man, not carnal reason, not the fantasy of others, but God Himself gives that growth. The terms 'joints and sinews' are a rough designation for 'tendons and ligaments' that connect the body parts to each other.
Words to that effect are also found in:
Ephesians 4:15, 16
But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
The idea is also that the various members of the Body of Christ are connected to the Head and to each other, with the Head providing the 'guidance' for the individual church members. The direct consequence of a personal relationship with the Lord is the relationship we have with each other as children of God. One Spirit, one Body (1 Corinthians 12). The Lord uses others for our benefit and uses us for the benefit of

others. We should, therefore, live for one another. Body parts do not behave independently. They form a whole, which was the intention, and we should realise that and be available for it. The aforementioned passages of Scripture state that there is only growth where there is also fellowship. It actually says that the believer who isolates himself, acts as a recluse and has no contact with other believers, does not grow.

**Colossians 2:20, 21**
If ye then be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not;}
'If' means: 'if it is the case' that those 'ordinances' from verse 14, but also those 'principalities and powers' from verse 15, are part of the fact that we have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, then do not touch them, do not taste them and do not handle them. It means the same thing three times, namely: do not get involved with them. We have 'died with Christ from the rudiments of the world' and therefore we have nothing to do with that philosophy, empty deceit, tradition of men, in short, those rudiments of the world from chapter 2:8.

**Colossians 2:22**
Which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men;
'Which things' is in contrast with the 'things to come' from verse 17. We are part of things to come, but 'these things' are the things of this old creation, in which man himself philosophises and says: it cannot be that man has to live without the law? The ideal is, also in the ancient world, that man does not need those laws, thinking he is good enough by nature to be able to live without laws and be free; that was the intention. But there is too much wickedness in man to be able to achieve that ideal and therefore laws are imposed and they are maintained with the sword (Romans 13).
Verse 22 says that all things 'perish with the using,' i.e., 'wear out' and are then replaced. Laws are replaced and are increasingly regarded as obsolete. The old world, the present world, is governed by death and thus by corruption. Man himself disappears in exactly the same way. He also wears out and disappears and so he is delivered from the law and from himself. After that he is no more and so the only way to salvation is resurrection from the dead and we have a share in that.

**Colossians 2:23**
Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.
Regarding the 'commandments and doctrines of men' from verse 22, the idea is that people have a good reason, a good story, for these ordinances. It can be well explained why those ordinances are so necessary. One can also very well explain why it is necessary that we Christians should also be subject to laws, otherwise it would become a mess. So there is a story to it, but it is 'self-imposed worship,' religion. It is one's own interpretation of how one wishes to serve God. Those stories should not be invented. It only seems interesting; it looks like humility and therefore servility.
In his Letter to the believers in Colosse, Paul writes that we have been raised with Christ and therefore have to do with Christ and with His Wisdom. The great idea is that we should not live according to norms that the world, the old man, creation, instinct or

carnal reason imposes on us, but we should live from that Wisdom that is in Christ, even if it is hidden in Him (Verse 3). This means that we should seek that Wisdom, and in practice, that is not so bad.
Matthew 7:7
Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
That Wisdom may be unsearchable (Romans 11:33), but that does not mean that God does not reveal that Wisdom to us, together in His Word and by His Spirit. That is, for example, the reason we are here together, namely to open that Word, so that the Spirit would have the opportunity to lead us into all that Truth. We should therefore seek those things and be occupied with them, and the Apostle continues that reasoning in chapter 3.

**Colossians 3:1-3**
If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

We have been 'made partakers of Christ' (Hebrews 3:14), and therefore we should seek the things of Christ. This naturally becomes to 'seek those things which are above,' for that is where Christ is—in heaven, that is, and not on earth, as is made clear for the sake of clarity. 'Seek' in verse 2 is 'set your affection'.
'Above' is Christ, 'sitteth on the right hand of God.' Hebrews 2:9: 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.' The Lord Jesus, the 'captain of their salvation' (Verse 10), and thereby the 'author and finisher of our faith.' (12:2) We should look unto Him and be His followers. Our 'citizenship'—our entire practical life, for that is truly the meaning of the term translated as 'our conversation' in Philippians 3:20—should be in heaven. Whatever befalls us, whatever 'happens' to us (Ecclesiastes), would in any case be used for good by God, namely to lead us to our 'adoption' as sons (Romans 8). Actually, I should just say that our whole life only has meaning where it is connected to heavenly things. It is also what the Lord does with us and what the Lord has in mind for us. We learn from Scripture that He is busy raising us, I am just using the neutral English word, and that means He really does have a hand in quite a number of things. Whether we see them as good or bad, we should likewise refrain from judging on that, we should accept what the Lord has said, such as that He 'would make all things work together for good.' (Romans 8:28)
We should not 'set our affection on things on the earth,' so we should not reckon with those things. The Lord Jesus made that clear even before Paul.
Matthew 6:33
33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
Seek first the kingdom of God, and you will no longer be concerned with the rest—the earthly things—is what it actually says. Something else is not needed. The Lord Jesus had already said earlier:
Matthew 6:25-32

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Where should we seek that Kingdom of God? In heaven, of course, where Christ is, on the Throne of that Kingdom, that is.

The argument in Colossians 3 is that we do not even have the right to dwell on earthly things, for the simple reason that we have died, and insofar as we still live, we live together with the resurrected Christ. From Him we have received eternal life. It is 'Christ liveth in me' (Galatians 2:20). That is approximately the same thought. Or, 'For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,' as verse 3 of Colossians 3 says. There our life is, only it is a hidden life, in the sense that it is not public. A life that cannot or even need not be displayed to the world. It takes place in secret.

This expression is not so strange, for even with the natural person, it is not about the outward things, but about what is in our heart. Our life is our 'experience' and that is separate from what others see of us in practice, or see us do. Our real life, our essence, is hidden from every other person. Here it says that we, as children of God, have a life that is in any case hidden from the world, and the only one who truly knows it is Christ. He knows better than we know our own lives, for when we consider our own lives, it may well be that we judge them incorrectly.

1 John 3:20

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and he knoweth all things.

It may be that you condemn yourself, or that your own heart or conscience condemns you, but whether God does so too is quite another story. It could very well be that He does not condemn us. We should be guided by how God views things, and God sees us as perfected in Christ. He knows more than we do. He will also bring the hidden things of our hearts to light, as it says in Romans 2:16, and that also implies the things in our hearts that are actually hidden from ourselves. The things we do not see or have ignored, or to which we paid no attention to at all. It is not really important either, for what is important is how God sees these things. We should acknowledge Him as our Superior and know that we live from the Hand of the One who 'giveth to all life, and breath, and all things' (Acts 17:25). This was said by the apostle Paul, on the Areopagus in Athens, about every person, of all humanity. Athens was in those days the capital of 'the philosophical world,' of the wisdom of this world, the Greek world. 'Athens' means that it falls over easily. 'Unstable,' it means more or less. It is not firm. This is how it is with human philosophy. Paul contrasts the wisdom of Christ with that. He comes in his speech to conclusions that all Greek philosophers could not reach.

**Colossians 3:4**
When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
The Apostle speaks again about 'the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Romans 8:18). Unfortunately, that is not a generally known thought. People are so fixated on: either we go to heaven, or we go to hell after our death, or that was it then, that they have no eye at all for these biblical statements that speak of our return with Christ. Christ will be revealed at the end of the 70th week, when He will set his feet on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4) after the conversion of Israel. Then he shall appear and then they shall see the Son of man coming through the clouds of heaven with great power and glory (Matthew 24). I hold that 'great power and glory' are terms to denote the Church. The 'Glory of Christ' is namely the Church, His Body. As the wife is the glory of the man, in Ephesians 5, the Church is the Glory of Christ.
We should realize that if there is anything to be revealed, it must happen in the future and not so much in this time. I think that the preaching which says that we must nurture our full potential as children of God does more harm than good. The Bible says that other people might, on occasion, recognise something in us, but it is not the general rule and certainly not the goal of our lives. The goal is that we show the Lord something. How should the world be able to see in us that we are children of God, if they do not know God and moreover do not know Christ? If Christ is in us, how would they know and recognise that, not to mention whether they would appreciate it. It says: 'in the world ye shall be hated, for they have hated me before you' (John 15:18).
Where we are aware of our position as citizens of heaven, as members of the Body of Christ, verse 5 then applies, because the next question is: what should we do with that, because we are still here?

**Colossians 3:5**
Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:
Death is separation, and the verb 'to kill' means 'to make a separation,' to not commune with it. The other biblical expression is 'to hold for dead' or 'to reckon for dead.' Since we have died with Christ, the things of the old man should no longer have influence on our lives and actions; that was the intention. We should hold those things for dead.
Romans 6:9-12
Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.
12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
Verse 11 says, 'reckon ye also.' In the Greek, that is the word 'logisomai,' derived from 'logos' (word, idea, thought), meaning 'to reckon,' 'to calculate.' It is 'bookkeeping,' and that is how you should view these things. Not vaguely, but very concretely; establish that it is so, and then proceed from there. Reckon it so, as if those things that are named—'fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence'—though for us by nature, for our old man, they are not dead, for God they are dead. They should not play a part in our 'experience,' our life and our thought. This means that we should not do these things. That is the ideal, but it is seldom reached. But in this context, to say,

‘do not…’ is nothing but law, and so I do not read this verse. It is about reckoning, after all, about accounting.
Verse 5 teaches that, should someone do these things (which we would do better not to know about anyway), we would not react to them. We do not reckon those things, for they have been put away for God. It belongs to the old man, and he is dead to God. You can consider it as sin, but we have ‘the forgiveness of sins’ (Romans 3:25; Colossians 1:14). We just have to forgive one another. Should we ourselves do these things, then we would not reckon it. That is a dangerous doctrine, for these things are misused, but it does not change the truth as such. For the one who says, ‘So I can do anything I want,’ the answer is yes. That is for each one to determine for himself. Where that is not ‘well-pleasing unto God,’ that is simply the working of the old man. But precisely then we should learn to live out of the grace with which the Lord is exceeding abundant (1 Timothy 1:14). How should a man learn to live out of grace, if you never sin at all, if you never do anything that is wrong? Then you would never know what ‘the reign of grace’ is, would you? If you did not sin, then you would have no need of grace.
From the context and the formulation, it appears that it is not even about incidental things such as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, covetousness, etc., but about a way of life, and that is not the same. You can, on occasion, do certain things, perhaps ‘stumble,’ but that is different from continuously seeking them. Perhaps these are extremes, for there are, of course, all kinds of ‘shades of gray,’ but here it is about a way of life as such. Things like fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness are truly things that largely determine the life of the natural man.
Hebrews 9:14
How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?
The cleansing of our conscience automatically implies that the Lord does nothing to make us sin less. He unburdens our heart and our conscience, our mind, so that our sins do not stand in our own way of serving the Lord.
So we should not seek the things mentioned in verse 5, but we should instead seek the Lord, that is to say, ‘the things which are above.’ After that, I would still like to have said that where we do that, it will indeed also have the result that we sin less. But I prefer to say that last of all, because I do not think it is usually really important. If it is truly so that our sinful deeds stand in the way of our service to the Lord, I am firmly convinced that the Lord will set us free from it, but where it does not stand in His way, He will also not deliver us from it. We must simply learn to live with who we are and possibly with what we do, which we may regret or not.
God can and will use us, while we are still in the flesh. We are sinners, but we do not have to live under ‘the dominion of sin.’ We should choose to live under ‘the dominion of Christ,’ who would do His work in and through us. Where we are still in a sinful world, in a sinful body with all its sinful instincts, it is precisely for the honour and glory of the Lord if we nevertheless make the Lord great. The Lord is not made great where we no longer sin, but where our sinful mortal bodies provide a dwelling for the Spirit who would rule in us. That it should bring us to our ‘adoption to sonship’ in the future, despite the presence of sins. That cannot be through the dominion of the law, but only through the dominion of grace.

**Colossians 3:7-9**
In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; namely, wrath, anger, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;'
That which in verse 5 is called 'to kill,' that is, 'mortify therefore your members,' is in verse 8 'to put off,' and in verse 9 'to have put off,' that 'ye have put off the old man.' These two latter expressions relate to clothing. One may put off the old and put on the New Man as if it were a garment.
To roll up a garment, is to put off his garment or 'reject the garment.' The whole of the old creation is considered the outward appearance, the garment, of God (Psalm 104; Hebrews 1:10-12). Because it is damaged or soiled, He takes it off and puts on a new garment. He deals with the defilement, puts away that old creation, and then clothes himself in a New Creation. It is to his honour that he puts away the old and puts on a new, clean, and purified garment. That same principle is also applied to us. We cannot, however, put off the old and put on a new, if there is no new one to be replaced. But God hath brought that new into being and made it available to us. He giveth it to us. Our responsibility is to truly put it on in practice.

**Colossians 3:10-11**
And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
It concerneth the things whereunto our thoughts are drawn. We should not seek, nor think upon, the things of the old man, but consciously orient ourselves upon Christ—the 'new Man'—and so think upon the things which are of Christ. Thereby do we 'put on the new Man,' who is 'renewed in knowledge.' It is the purpose in the future that the old man, his thought and his works, be wholly replaced by the new Man, after 'the image of him that created him' (Romans 8:29). Whereby it is said that not the old man, but the new man is the 'image of God,' and therefore 'the express image of his person' (Hebrews 1:3).
The verse saith: 'we are renewed in knowledge.' 'Knowledge' meaneth 'fellowship.' Knowledge is synonymous with life. It is not merely to know something, but it meaneth 'to be connected with something or someone.' We should know Him. That is much more than to know who He is. To 'know' meaneth 'to have a share in,' 'to have fellowship with.' To know something or someone meaneth to have a share in it, to be involved with it, in it, with it. To 'know Christ' meaneth to 'have fellowship with Him in practical life.' In the first place, in our thoughts. So we should put on the new Man, 'who is renewed in knowledge,' so as to come to fellowship with Him.

**Colossians 3:12-13**
Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
The Lord expects of us, as children of God, that we should 'forgive,' for that is the translation of the word which meaneth 'to show grace' and 'to let go,' in the sense of 'to ignore,' and 'to do nothing about it.' That is what 'forgive' means in the 'Our Father.'

Matthew 6:12
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Luke 11:4;
And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
Luke 17:3
Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
'To forgive' is 'not to react to it.' One should act as if it is not there. We should only know each other for who we are in Christ, and we should meet each other at 'the throne of grace.' Therefore it is called in Hebrews 10:25 'our mutual meeting.' This is not only about our meeting 'at the judgment seat of Christ' (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10), we should already meet each other there now, because we should serve Him who sitteth on that Throne.
The great advantage is that we have nothing to do with the law. We need not know whether something is good or wrong, in the sense of whether it is permitted or forbidden.
If we, moreover, state that we do not live under the law, there often follows the discussion that begins with: so you can just go on sinning… The intention is not that we are delivered from the law so that we might sin freely, but so that we might serve one another in love, without taking anything against each other. That is more difficult than it seemeth, but that is what this passage of scripture is about.
2 Corinthians 5:19-21
To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
God hath resolved the problem that was, and so we have no more excuse to not approach Him with boldness. This includes the dedication of our body to Him, that we might serve Him, notwithstanding that sin still dwelleth in our old man. The intention is that we should be changed. Not on the outside, but 'in the spirit of our mind.' (Romans 12:2) Not 'conformed to this world,' for the principles which are offered to us in the Word of God within the New Man do not belong in that world at all. In a sinful world, that doth not work. The 'reign of grace' doth not work in the world. In a local Christian fellowship, it usually doth not work either. For one doth so desire that all members behave themselves somewhat properly, and if grace reigns, it means they may do as they please, with no one able to do anything about it. Hence, the reign of grace is not generally popular in practice. It is, at most, mentioned from the pulpit, but preferably not further.
As children of God, we have received New Life. The life of Christ is in us, as is His Power. That can only work where the law doth not reign, where there is no bondage to human traditions, 'rudiments,' philosophy, and vain deceit. We should distance ourselves from typical matters belonging to the old man. We should not reckon them. They should not be a part of our worldview (philosophy). This is difficult when we cling to our human considerations, traditions, and to what others think or believe of us. Then we have a problem. If we do not care too terribly much about that, then we have no problem. It is

truly easy if we reckon the things in the old man as dead, and simply do not reckon with them.
Precisely because in the Church there is no distinction between 'Jew or Greek,' because they are added to the Church by God Himself, one ought to endure one another within the Church context. We should not know one another after the flesh, but only and alone as New Creatures in Christ. Though at home we may well be attached to our own ways of life and customs, as children of God, we should not confront one another with those things.
With the 'bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,' you do not get far in the old creation. In that, you must be assertive, stand up for yourself, and all such things. As Christians, we need not do that. We have One who stands up for us when it is necessary, when He deems it necessary, for we are the 'elect of God, holy and beloved.' That means that we have nothing to lose and that we have Someone who cares for us. That releaseth us from the necessity of standing up for ourselves, of defending our own interests.
The aforementioned 'inner affections' should proceed from the heart which we have received from God. The indwelling Christ truly maketh us free, from within. 'Affection' is 'motive,' and motives are the things which move us, which drive us. Inner affection meaneth that we are moved from within.
Verse 13 saith, that as Christ hath forgiven us, so shall we forgive one another. When we are aware that Christ hath forgiven us and still doth forgive, we would surely not dream of reproaching others for their sins. You simply cannot do that. That right is not yours. Thus, we should forbear one another and give one another space to gain experience. Even 'granting' one another our missteps. For if you never once stumble, or almost stumble, then you never learn anything either. We should be chastened and corrected by the Lord. (Hebrews 12) That would not be at all necessary if we all lived exemplary lives. No one becomes an adult if he hath not had setbacks in life. We as children of God also do not become sons of God if we have not had our difficulties, had to make choices, and had to bear responsibility.
We have the redemption. Upon us is shown 'the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.' (Ephesians 2:7) So not according to the riches of our repentance or of our confession. God hath forgiven us. Out of that we live, and therefore we are free. When we know that principle, then we also know that others need not confess their sins to us.

***Colossians 3:14***
And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.
One of the responsibilities which we have individually as believers, that which we should 'put on,' is charity. Romans 12:9 saith: 'Let love be without dissimulation.' We should not feign that we love one another. We should not perform that, for that is what the natural man doth, namely pretending to be other than he is, in order to attain certain goals or to be liked. We should be honest, sincere. What truly gives us peace is not going along with current trends, but simply being without dissimulation. Then thou hast 'an abhorrence of evil and cleavest to that which is good,' saith the same verse. The feigning of charity therefore falleth into the category of 'evil.' But that is also not necessary, for the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. Also, consider that love is the outworking of the life of the Spirit, of Christ within us. As soon as we start to perform

these kinds of things, which are named here, to feign them, we hinder or even kill that 'fruit of the Spirit.' As 'the elect of God, holy and beloved,' we should bear fruit, namely love, joy, peace, longsuffering. (Galatians 5:22)

**Colossians 3:15**

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

That peace will only rule in our hearts when verses 12-14 are also true for us. When we have put on that New Man. We find peace in that, for the simple reason that we do not seek quarrel, at least, and do not react to others who seek to quarrel with us. But in the first place, we should have peace with God and thus peace with ourselves. God accepts us as we are, and we should do the same. When we have peace with God, all else is of no more consequence. We should be continuously aware that we live from that, and it is stated here in strong terms. The peace with God, the peace that cometh from God, should 'rule in your hearts.' That is determinative for all our actions and inactions.

'Grace' and 'peace' are very often mentioned in one breath in the wishes, at the end, or at the beginning, of the various Epistles. Here in Colossians, in 1:2: 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' Grace and peace is the fixed expression, for they are both terms that already functioned in the Old Testament as an indication of the New Covenant. 'My covenant of peace,' according to Numbers 25:12. Grace and peace rule in us in the same measure that we have 'put off the old man and have put on the new man.' The responsibility for that lieth with ourselves, although it is a work that He will do in, on, and through us. We should be aware of the work that the Lord wisheth to do in us, so that we may recognise and make room for that work in and on us.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

The result will be that the peace of God rules in our hearts. Our 'heart' is what we are. 'Heart' means the 'inward man.' The outward man is the house we live in, or the 'vehicle' in which we move. 'The peace of God rules in your inward man.' On the outside, it doth not always look that way, but you can still have peace. As a believer, you can be sad on the one hand, and yet no one taketh away your joy. Our being, our inner self, should be filled, but with that which is good.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Professor Bettex wrote in his booklet 'A Matter of Taste,' in 1906, that when it cometh to nutrition, man is very alert to what one should or should not eat, and in what quantities. Hygiene was also very much in vogue back then. But the same man, who is so meticulous about what he eateth and drinketh and concerneth himself with the outside, is not at all critical when it cometh to his spiritual well-being and his spiritual food. Our responsibility is that we take in the good food, at least in the spiritual realm, and subsequently trust in the power of the Word of God. Then we do not have to worry about all sorts of things that are 'dangerous.' If you manage to avoid everything that is bad for a Christian, but do not fill yourself with the Word of God, there is no question of spiritual

life and you remain empty inside. What Paul saith in Romans 1:16, '…the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation,' we should not underestimate. 'Salvation' is not only 'salvation toward the spirit,' but also 'salvation toward the soul,' that is, in practical life, and for that purpose, the Gospel of Christ is just as much the power of God. That Message taketh care of our spiritual health.

1 Timothy 6:3, 4a

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4a He is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting…

The 'wholesome words' of our Lord Jesus, which lead us to godliness, are what men should abide by. If one doth not, then he becometh 'oedemic,' or 'puffed up,' retaining water and swelling up. If that which one taketh in only filleth, but hath no nourishment within it, then one still goeth hungry, and that is what this speaketh of. Thou becomest fat thereby, and it seemeth as if thou art nourished, but that is not so at all. Thou knowest some things, but not true Truth. Such a one 'doteth,' and like 'being puffed up,' this is a medical term. To 'dote' is what a fever doth.

Almost the first words of the Lord Jesus were not spoken in vain: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' That is a citation from Deuteronomy 8:3: '…that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD.' And so, according to Paul, the Word of God, the 'Word of Christ,' should 'dwell in you richly.' It belongeth there, and there it abideth. Not just a little from time to time, but it is constantly present. 'Richly' meaneth not a little, nor for a short time, but much and permanently. This doth mean, however, that thou shouldest take that Word unto thyself with care. When thou readest the Bible, thou needest not read two chapters in a row; two verses are enough, if thou but let them sink in. This is after the example of the 'manna' which God gave to the people of Israel (Exodus 16). We should enjoy it and know how to deal with it, for it is said therewith: 'in all wisdom,' and thou must learn that. We should understand something of that spiritual food and know how to work with it in the practice of our life, having some profit from the instruction that is given unto us. Wisdom is not the same as science or knowledge, but it meaneth that thou canst also apply it in practice. Wisdom is a practical notion, and that is what this chapter is about. We should come to maturity through the Word of God, and where that is so, then 'teaching and admonishing one another' followeth. That is not in the sense of rebuking, but in the sense of comforting, for that is the word. And that with 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' (See also Ephesians 5:17-20). That we should do that with the Word of God is written in black and white in the Bible, but here it doth not say so. 'Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' can be for instruction, but they must be for comfort and encouragement to him who heareth and who singeth them. The spiritual song hath always had that function, also directed at one another. Singing is by definition singing together, whereby it is an art to do it in unison. The thought is that we should express the same things harmoniously, say the same things, and if we take that as literally as possible, singing cometh of itself. The purpose of the use is to give expression to the fellowship that is. Singing promoteth togetherness, for while singing, thou art obliged to listen to one another, and that promoteth fellowship.

Romans 15:5, 6

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward

another according to Christ Jesus: 6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Our service to the Lord, under the New Covenant, is 'with one mind and one mouth.' That is, of course, meant figuratively. It meaneth 'all alike,' and the congregational singing giveth expression thereto, it is a picture thereof. What is important with a spiritual song is that it cometh from the heart, with full devotion. 'Sing it like you mean it,' said Henk Williams. In the course of time, I have known several for whom that singing is not necessary. 'We are only concerned with the Word,' one then saith, and with that I do not agree. In the first place, because the Bible speaketh explicitly about singing, and one of the greatest Bible books we have is the book of Psalms. Those are songs. In the temple service under the Old Covenant there were also 24 orders of musicians and singers, choirs, that is, for there was singing and music made in the temple 24 hours a day. That was an essential part of the service to the LORD.
1 Corinthians 14:15
What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.
It is indeed about the words we speak while singing, and not just about the sounds. One shall sing with the spirit and with the understanding, and thus with the heart, and only after that is it written in Colossians 3:17:
The words are more important than the works. When a man doth something, he useth his tongue, is the biblical thought. When a man giveth expression to what is in his heart, he doth so first by speaking, with his mouth that is. The first expression of what the Lord doth in us, what the Spirit doth in us, what the Word doth in us, should be singing.
The intention is that our service to the Lord consisteth in that whatsoever we do, we do it for Him, in the consciousness that we are children of God. With full dedication. With surrender, 'with thy might' (Ecclesiastes 9:10). In this way we are made able ('to be fitted') 'for service above,' as the last line of the song 'Take Time To Be Holy' (sung by Tennessee Ernie Ford, among others) saith, that is, 'Take time for thy sanctification' for our service with the Lord in the future. In 1 Corinthians 10 it is stated thus:
1 Corinthians 10:31
Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.
Whatsoever it is, do it to the glory of God. 'Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' We should therefore thank Him in all that we do, is the thought. For with our whole being, our whole possession, our whole body, we are His property. We have received grace to serve Him and that applieth not to a special ministry, but to our whole life.

**Colossians 3:18**
Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.
I am aware that these verses are misused, but nevertheless they are in the Bible. If you would use the verse to oppress women in general and to consider them as submissive to men, I must tell you that that is not what it saith, for it saith 'ye wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.' See also 1 Peter 3:1: '…ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.' They need not be subject to other men. The concept is used only within the framework of marriage.

1 Corinthians 11:3
But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
Men should likewise be submissive, for they also have someone above them. We as creatures have always someone above us, because we have a serving function. In the first place toward our Creator and in practice that meaneth being serving toward one another, toward people in general and toward the 'household of faith' in particular (Galatians 6:10).
Scripture establishes a hierarchy where Christ is the head of every man, the man is head of the woman, and God is head of Christ, which should guide a wife's service to the Lord, directing it primarily toward her own husband.
Our lives must align with God's will to allow Him to work within us. Marriage is seen as an earthly parallel to the divine relationships between Creator and creation, and Christ and His Church, providing spiritual guidance for life on earth.

**Colossians 3:19**
Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them**.**
Ephesians 5:25 and 28 saith the very same, but referreth to how 'Christ also loved the church.' For 'he is the Saviour of the body.' Christ is the 'sustainer,' the 'caretaker of the body.' Our ability to serve God cometh through, by, or in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His responsibility that the Church as such serveth God; He standeth, after all, at the head thereof. In the same manner as Christ is responsible for the Church, so is the man responsible for his wife, for if his wife is subject to him, it meaneth that he beareth the full responsibility. The next thought is then that the man 'giveth himself up' for the wife, even as Christ gave Himself up for the Church and the Creator for the creation. Where the wife wisheth to serve the man, the man shall also wish to maintain his wife. 'Be not bitter against her' giveth the impression that the man hath a tendency to become bitter toward his own wife and thus giveth up courage, for that is the popular variant.
Here are described the relations within the family, and we find the ideal of how it should be. Every deviation on our part is at our own risk, but in any case is contrary to the will of the Lord. Our service to the Lord beginneth in our normal daily life, and that is first in our own family. The Lord expecteth of us that we have our own private life in order and that the marriage be rightly ordered. Therein should the Word of God, the Spirit of God, the Life of Christ in us, be expressed. It is to the glory and honour of God, that we, who are by nature sinners, subject our bodies, our lives, unto Him and that His life is expressed in and through our body, and thus simply in our daily life.

**Colossians 3:20-21**
Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.
In general, children should be obedient to their parents, 'for this is well pleasing unto the Lord,' and I think also unto the parents. Moreover, that also applieth to us children of God, that we are obedient unto God. Not only submissive, but obedient, and that is a whole phase further. The same distinction also occurreth in the exposition in Romans 13 about our situation in the world, as such. It saith there that we are to be subject to the authorities that are placed over us, but I have read nowhere that we must also be obedient to the authorities. The apostles at least did not do the latter when they had to

appear before their authorities, the Sanhedrin, because they were subject to it. That authority commanded them to no longer speak in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The intention was, of course, that they should be obedient to this command. But they were not, although they were still subject to that Jewish authority.
Acts 4:20
For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
They did not rail against the Sanhedrin, but stood there, modest, submissive, but yet not obedient to the command which they simply could not carry out.
The thought is that we as children of God are submissive to one another, so as to serve one another.
Ephesians 4:32–5:2
And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. 1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
Ephesians 5:1-2
Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.
The conclusion must be that the children are reckoned with the Church, because they are reckoned by God 100% under the responsibility of the parents. Any discussion about whether children are saved and whether they go along with the rapture of the Church can only exist because one doth not perceive what the position of children is in the Bible. Those who are called 'children' are 'immature' and therefore not responsible for their own lives. The Bible calleth them 'infants,' which meaneth 'they have no say.' Children of believing parents go with them when the rapture of the Church taketh place. If children of believing parents die, then they lift up their eyes in heaven; I have not the slightest doubt about that. The only problem thereafter is up to what age these things apply? I do not know, but I do not think it is bound to a specific age, expressed in years Although we have become New Creatures in Christ, that doth not mean that we are suddenly above all of that. It meaneth that we are now able to answer to the plans that the Creator Himself hath for the creation. That should, namely, serve Him. We should learn to serve, and we find that thought in the whole Bible. We should learn to be humble, so that we might be exalted by God in the future. That we would receive our reward from the Lord, says the following.

**Colossians 3:22-23**
Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;
Here we move beyond the relations within the family or household. With verse 23, I have the impression that it is not only about the servants from verse 22, but also about the fathers from verse 21, the children from verse 20, the husbands from verse 19, and the wives from verse 18. For from verse 23 we return to the general situation. Although there is a difference in responsibility and ministry, whatsoever we do, we should do it 'heartily as to the Lord' (Greek: 'with your whole soul') and not for men, in the sense of pleasing men. We do, of course, do things for other people, whether voluntarily or because we have obligations. But it saith here, we should do it 'as to the Lord' and that with our full

commitment, with surrender and involvement (Luke 10:27), to do it as well as possible. That giveth us satisfaction and joy here.
Under all circumstances, we should be conscious that we are servants of God and that we serve the Lord and that we expect our reward from Him. We should be conscious that the essence of our life lieth not in our earthly circumstances, but that under all circumstances we are children of God and should therefore serve Him. Only on that ground may we expect help and guidance from Him. You can hardly expect the Lord to help or guide us when we withdraw our lives from Him and just live our own lives. He hath no interest in that at all. It only becometh of importance when we 'seek those things which are above.'
'Ye servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh,' which is thus a stronger formulation than the earlier 'be subject,' is the intention. Not 'as men pleasers but in singleness of heart, fearing God.' 'Singleness' meaneth 'simplicity.' The term meaneth that one should be obedient without ulterior motives. With only 'one purpose' is the thought, not with different goals, but with one goal, namely to fear God, to serve Him, for that is what it meaneth in practice. To 'fear God' meaneth, 'to take Him into account,' to acknowledge Him in His capacity as our Lord and Master. It is according to God's will that we are subject, and possibly obedient, to those who are set over us. That is best for all parties involved, both in terms of the results to be achieved and for peace of mind. That, of course, also applieth in society. The obligations and responsibilities that we have, we should fulfil and bear. But the beauty of the biblical thought is that where we do that, we shall receive a reward from God and on the way thereto He will provide for us.

**Colossians 3:24**
Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.
'Knowing' meaneth, 'in the consciousness that,' we should know that, for otherwise it doth not work. We should be conscious that we receive a reward, but that is not what it saith now. It is now called 'the recompense,' and that meaneth 'payment.' After that there is another term: 'inheritance.' In practice that is the same, for the reward, the recompense, consisteth of an inheritance, which we would receive. An inheritance that God reserveth for us in heaven.
1 Peter 1:4
To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
Another term is 'glory,' because in the future we shall 'share in the dominion of Christ.' We should not only enter the Kingdom, but actually also inherit it. Elsewhere it is called 'the promise,' because it concerneth an inheritance which hath been promised. For example, in Hebrews 9:15: 'the promise of eternal inheritance…' A promised inheritance, therefore. That should we know and of that should we always be aware. 'For ye serve the Lord.' 'Your Master' meaneth here in practice, namely 'Christ.'

**Colossians 3:25**
But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

‘Wrong’ here referreth not to the works of the sinful man as such. It meaneth here: not living in accordance with what we believe. That we, as the property of our Lord, withdraw ourselves from it. He that doeth this wrong shall also bear that wrong. He shall then not receive ‘the recompence of the inheritance.’ In other words: He shall ‘not receive a full reward.’ (2 John 1:8) Or ‘If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.’ (1 Corinthians 3:15) Or: ‘Found naked,’ instead of ‘clothed upon.’ (2 Corinthians 5:3, 4)
‘There is no respect of persons’ meaneth that it is again not about who a person is, what office he holdeth, or what position. It is only about that which is in the heart. The attitude with which one doeth things.

**Colossians 4:1**
Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.
‘Ye masters’ was not mentioned in the list in chapter 3, but is here immediately. ‘Ye masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.’ The terms ‘just and equal’ are the same. ‘Equal’ is ‘just’ and ‘just’ is ‘equal.’ These ‘masters’ must also know, be aware, that they have a Master in heaven, a Head in heaven. The thought is simply that how a man treateth his inferiors, so will he himself be treated by his superiors, on God's behalf. If you want to lay claim to God’s grace and favour, then we should likewise demonstrate those things.

**Colossians 4:2**
Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
This referreth back to verses 16 and 17 of the previous chapter. The Scripture portion from 3:15 through to 4:1 is directly concerned with thanksgiving. ‘Prayer and thanksgiving’ are in the Bible, in a very narrow sense, the expression that we speak to, or with, God. In a broader context, those expressions mean that we live in dependence on Him and thereby in fellowship with Him. That we serve the Lord Christ (3:24) in our daily lives. That we live in awareness of our connection with Him.
1 Thessalonians 5:17
Pray without ceasing.
That is not possible and you can only explain this if you know what that term meaneth, namely that it concerneth constantly living in fellowship with the Lord.
1 Timothy 2:8
I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.
This speaks of the service of the Lord and of living in dependence upon Him. ‘Lifting up holy hands’ is figurative and referreth to hands that are consecrated to His service, by which one doeth works to His honour and receiveth from Him grace and blessings in general. ‘Pray’ is thus the term for the whole of life, lived in communion with and dependence upon the Lord.
The raising of hands is derived from Jewish customs, which are derived from the law, from Mosaic ordinances. The Lord said that He would fill the hands of the sons of Aaron (Exodus 28:41). He gave the priests a task to perform. Their hands were to be filled with the priesthood. The other side of the story is that they lived by that with which their

hands were filled, namely with ‘bread and wine.’ From this cometh the custom, and thus also the New Testament expression ‘lifting up holy hands.’
‘Watch in the same with thanksgiving.’ We are a people of the Lord, whom we serve, and we should therefore always be watchful. We are ‘children of the day’ (1 Thessalonians 5:5) and should not sleep as do others. We should watch and give Him the honour, and thus pray with thanksgiving. If we do not watch, if we are not attentive for a moment, then we can no longer expect it from the Lord, but from ourselves or from our brethren and sisters. If it then succeedeth nevertheless, we take the credit ourselves, as if to say: we did that well again. Then there is no thanksgiving. Therefore, ‘continue in prayer,’ that is, expect it from Him. ‘Be watchful’ is in the midst of the verse, for that is the predominant concept. Be aware of how things truly are. Do that with thanksgiving, that is, give God the honour for all things, and He shall honour us.

**Colossians 4:3**
Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
The idea is that verse 2 applies not only to us, but also to our brethren and sisters in general and, naturally, also to those who ‘serve with the Word.’ We are highly dependent on it. Paul asketh for prayer for himself, for he too knoweth that he is dependent on the Lord Himself. He asketh that God would open ‘a door of utterance’ and state the precise nature of that door, namely his own mouth. ‘That God would open unto us a door of utterance’ is a beautiful term for a mouth, the door through which the word proceedeth, ‘to speak the mystery of Christ’ and not merely the Gospel, which in itself is not so difficult. The speaking of the mystery of Christ happeneth not to those who know not the Gospel, but rather to those who do know it. ‘The mystery of Christ’ is the designation for all that ‘present truth,’ as Peter calleth it in 2 Peter 1:12. The mystery is mentioned in countless places in the Old and New Testaments. It is one of the most important subjects and, in our day, perhaps the most important Biblical subject. We should be aware that God doth not concern Himself with the world. He hath indeed given us His Word in writing and will no doubt ensure that it is maintained and made known to believers, but certainly not to the world. God chooseth the believers and taketh them out of the world as such. With the world, God wisheth to have nothing to do. God relinquish the world (Romans 1), and this answereth the frequently asked question: if there is a God, why is the world such a mess? He will only set things in order after it hath been demonstrated for 2,000 years what becometh of the world, of humanity, if God doth not meddle with it.
The Gospel is not a message for the betterment of the world, but is intended for people who seek the truth. They are taken out of that world and transferred from darkness (ignorance) into His hidden Kingdom (Colossians 1:13). In this way, they become part of ‘the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 13:11). And Paul’s work as an evangelist, for the edification (building up) of the Church, is to speak about ‘the mystery of Christ’ in this world. This is not about the improvement or prosperity of man, let alone that of the world. For this reason, it is not a popular message. For the preacher of that message, it is therefore a thankless task to preach it, for men do not wish to hear it.
‘For which I am also in bonds’ can be explained in two different ways, both of which are applicable. It meaneth here that he is imprisoned, or at least limited in his freedom in Rome, as a result of his speaking about ‘the mystery of Christ.’ Therefore, because of the

persecution. It can also mean that he is imprisoned in order that he might speak that mystery. Paul was certainly not in solitary confinement in Rome. He was under 'custodia liberia.' He was, in his own rented dwelling, indeed a prisoner, but at the same time free to go where he wished, at least within Rome, but he always had a soldier attached to him. He could simply do his work there. He did that for two years, and it saith without hindrance, to the Jewish leaders in Rome, for I am convinced that that mystery was the subject that the apostle Paul discussed with the Jewish leaders (See Acts 28).
The public proclamation of the Gospel to all nations began not with Adam, nor with Noah, Abraham, or Moses, but only with the resurrection of Christ. First, the work had to be finished (John 19:30), and thereafter it could be openly proclaimed.
Acts 17:30
And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:
In Athens, Paul telleth the inhabitants who 'THE UNKNOWN GOD' is (Verse 23). Earlier, Moses said: 'the secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children…' (Deuteronomy 29:29). He then had to give expression to it in the familiar symbols of the Old Testament temple and tabernacle service. The apostle Paul, however, speaketh freely about 'the mystery of Christ,' for that is what he must do.

**Colossians 4:4**
That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
'To manifest' is the opposite of to hide. And that is precisely what needed to happen. That which was hidden should be made manifest, and that is what the apostle Paul doth in the prison wherein he is and from which he wrote this Epistle. He preached the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, as it existed in our days, namely hidden in heaven and with the Lord.

**Colossians 4:5, 6**
Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.
The idea is that in verses 3 and 4, the Apostle speaketh about the Word of God. And in verse 6, he still speaketh about it. In verses 3 and 4, it is about him doing that. In verse 6, it is about us possibly doing that. The conclusion must therefore be that verse 5 also apparently concerneth the Word of God and the speaking thereof. Verse 6 is therefore not primarily about the way of life in general, but specifically about what one should or should not do. And so specifically about that Word of God, which one should speak, and for that, wisdom is indeed necessary. If only because we are mostly forced to wait for the right opportunity, and then to seize it. And where we speak about it, we should preferably do so with understanding, with wisdom, with insight. The Word of God is, after all, holy, and one should handle it in an appropriate manner.
'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without,' referreth to speaking with unbelievers.
'Redeeming the time.' 'To buy' fundamentally hath the meaning of 'to acquire,' 'to get into one's possession.' That need not necessarily cost anything. According to Biblical standards, you can also buy without money, 'Come, buy, without money,' saith Isaiah 55:1. If five foolish virgins still have to go and buy oil, and oil is a symbol of the Spirit or

of eternal life, then they do not have to pay for it, but they have to acquire it, apparently go and get it somewhere (Matthew 25). Thus, one should also read it here. The available time should also be used. If the opportunity ariseth, we should seize it. Not because it suiteth us, but because there happeneth to be an opportunity. Then it is 'the opportune time.'

Denominations exist which believe that if you are a child of God, you will become rich and prosperous in this world, materially speaking (the 'prosperity gospel'). They think that the Lord will then give us all manner of things in this life, because those are His promises. That is absolutely absurd, for we do not belong in this world at all. The Lord maketh us rather 'strangers and foreigners' (Ephesians 2:19) in this world, which is not our own at all.

Paul writeth to Timothy: 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season' (2 Timothy 4:2). We should speak the word 'in season and out of season,' whether it suiteth us or not. Perchance we had other plans, but if we get the opportunity to speak about Biblical matters, about the Lord, then we should make time for it. From this perspective, it therefore doth cost us something, namely our own time. The Apostle prayeth that he be given the opportunity to speak about 'the mystery of Christ,' and he telleth us that we too should be ready with wisdom to do so. That opportunity is rare, but when it is there, one should use it. What is more wonderful than to do that? To this end, we are primarily intended. In that context, verse 6 also saith: 'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.'

'With grace' can be read as 'flavourful,' because it is followed by 'seasoned with salt,' for salt serveth primarily to make food palatable. The Biblical idea is that food without salt is tasteless. The Word is therefore considered here as food, and it should be flavourful, namely, 'seasoned with salt.' What, then, doth salt actually represent? I could give two answers to that. But the most fundamental is actually that salt is an image of the Word of God. The idea is therefore that whatever we say, whatever our word is, it should always be seasoned with the Word of God. Although we would indeed choose our own words when we say or pass something on, the message as such should, to a significant extent, consist of the Word of God, even if we do not quote it literally. That is also difficult otherwise, if the 'Word of Christ dwelleth richly in us' (Colossians 3:16).

Salt is a beautiful image of the Word of God, and possibly of the Spirit of God, because it maketh things palatable and digestible. Not only words, but the whole of life as such. If the Word of God is not there, then our whole life under the sun is completely meaningless, according to the Preacher. It maketh life meaningful and therefore also 'digestible'; it maketh life flavourful. You learn to enjoy it. Moreover, salt preserves, is anti-spoilage, and that is exactly what it is all about.

John 3:15

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Salt hath a disinfecting effect; it disinfecting wounds. It kills certain bacteria, to prevent decay. Salt hath a cleansing effect. From ancient times, a newborn baby was apparently washed with salt for disinfection (Ezekiel 16:4). The Hebrew word for 'salt' corresponds to the Hebrew word for 'speech.' Salt is 'melach,' and speech is 'milah,' but it is actually the same word. In any case, it cometh from the same root. Salt is an image of the speaking of God.

Matthew 5:13

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.
Verily, if I speak shortly, this meaneth that they should speak the Word of God and thus scatter 'that salt' upon the earth. They are held responsible for the preaching of the Word of God after the resurrection of Christ. The thought then followeth that if that salt is not there, then nothing is meaningful anymore. Then nothing hath any sense, and everything might as well be cast away. Even the whole creation itself would then have no reason to exist. If that Word of God is not there, the whole world in which we live is absolutely, yea, absolutely meaningless and therefore also tasteless. This meaning of salt is strikingly demonstrated, from another angle, by the way, in Leviticus 2.
Leviticus 2:13
And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.
One should prepare a meal for the Lord, and that is called 'the meat offering.' The Lord desireth salt in His food, to put it popularly, namely 'the salt of the covenant of thy God.' That referreth to the Words of God, from which it appeareth that salt is an image of the Word of God. Whatever one offereth to the Lord, it should be the result of His own Word. Whatever we speak to the Lord, it should be accompanied by His own Words. The point is that our words should at all times be sprinkled with salt. The Word of God should resonate within them. Our own words have no savour at all and therefore no meaning at all. They are thus not pleasant either, if they are not the result of the Word which first dwelleth in our heart.
I read 'at all times' not as at every moment and everywhere, but 'at every opportunity' when it is 'the opportune time' from the preceding verse. We should not let an 'opportunity' pass us by to speak the Words of God. The intention is that we are aware of our responsibility and walk in wisdom with those who are without, that is, that we realise that it is not about our philosophy, which we should pass on to others, but that we, as children of God, minister that 'power of God unto salvation' (Romans 1:16). We should all keep the Word, and to some it is said that they should entrust the Word to faithful men who in turn would be able to teach others also. Paul is concerned that the Truth remaineth preserved and he doth so here also in this Epistle. In that context, we read the following verses.
Perchance it soundeth somewhat irreverent, but I do not mean it so; the Epistle endeth with a whimper. That is often the case, because an Epistle then suddenly endeth with 'household matters,' with greetings from and to people whom we mostly know not. The important doctrinal Truth hath been set forth in the preceding chapters, and what it is now about is the ministry thereof. In the first place by the apostle Paul himself, and we have just read that in the first verses of Colossians 4. Thereafter by every believer, as is written in verses 5 and 6, and from verse 7 onwards we are concerned with all sorts of names of people who are involved in this work in some way or another. Not necessarily people who also go out to preach the Gospel or to teach believers, but people who are involved in the work as such, for often much more is involved than just 'the ministry of the Word.'

**Colossians 4:7-8**

All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts:
Of Tychicus, we know nothing else. In Acts 20:4, we first encounter him. He was one of the people who travelled with Paul. What we do know, from this verse among others, is that he was the bearer of this Epistle, from Rome, to Colosse. On the same journey, he delivered yet another Epistle, as apparent from Ephesians 6:21. There we find words of a similar tenor: 'But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.' And he will also have delivered the Epistle to the Philippians during that journey. There can be no doubt that the Apostle wrote the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians more or less simultaneously.
Tychicus was not travelling alone, for he had Onesimus with him.

**Colossians 4:9**
With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.
Onesimus was therefore from Colosse. Tychicus and Onesimus 'shall make known unto you all things which are done here,' and 'here' naturally referreth to Rome and Paul's circumstances there. Tychicus taketh upon himself the responsible task of delivering these Epistles, at least the ones to Ephesus and Colosse, and with them also the one to Philemon, if you ask me, although Onesimus might also have done that, but they were together. The same applies to the Philippian Epistle.
The delivery of those Epistles was therefore not done by just anyone, but by 'Tychicus, a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord.' Whether he 'served with the Word,' as it is called, we read nothing. He is, however, considered a fellowservant, a faithful minister, a beloved brother. He thus falleth into the category also mentioned here, namely 'deacons' (1 Timothy 3:8, 12). These are 'ministers of God.' I must tell you, there is actually nothing special about the deacons at all; they are simply called 'ministers,' and in Greek, that is a 'diakonos.' That word is also used here in Colossians 4:7. Deacons, ministers, is the general designation for all who serve the Lord, even without immediately preaching the Word. The other category is that of 'overseer.' An overseer is indeed a deacon, but a deacon is not yet an overseer. I also think that someone never becometh an overseer if he is not first a deacon, if you understand what I mean. And above all, understand that we are not talking about official offices, for they do not exist in the official sense of the word. The word 'deacon' gives the impression, as if it were a specific Biblical ecclesiastical function, and it is not. Just as the 'appointment of elders' would be an ecclesiastical matter. That is not it either.
1 Corinthians 4:1-2
Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
One should be faithful to the ministry, to the service, which one may have, whatever that is. The requirement is that 'a man be found faithful.' The point is that he doeth it, and continueth to do it, is faithful to his Lord, so that the Lord can count on it. For the responsibility which they have, they have obtained not from below, but from above. The apostle Paul, for example, was not appointed by Peter or by anyone else; he was called

by God Himself. Peter and the other disciples were called by the Lord Himself. Paul, in turn, took Timothy with him and gave him ever greater responsibility. He wrote two Epistles to encourage him. In this way, Timothy rolled into that work and not because he had been nominated for some function in the local church.
The service of Tychicus, 'the privileged,' 'the happy one' it actually meaneth, consisted among other things of reporting to Colosse on the circumstances of Paul and his companions in Rome, and vice-versa probably. So that they would be aware of one another's goings-on, so that there would also be fellowship in a practical sense. A sympathising with one another, because one is connected with one another in the Body of Christ. That is the bond we have with each other.
Onesimus was not so faithful, as a slave at least, for he was a runaway slave. We know not why, but it was so, as appeareth from the Epistle to Philemon, who lived in Colosse. That was a special Epistle with which this Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon, was sent back to his master, his owner in a sense.. It is hinted that Onesimus was unprofitable, but that he hath now become profitable. Whether Onesimus was such a good boss for his staff, we likewise don't know. That is not addressed in that Epistle. Onesimus ended up in Rome and there, in some way, had an encounter with Paul. How, we are not told. There he came to believe, and precisely because he had become a believer, Paul sent him back to his boss, whom Paul apparently also knew. But why is this in the Bible? There is a relatively simple answer to that. Because of the symbolism behind it.
I believe that the whole story of Onesimus, as mentioned in the Epistle to Philemon, is nothing other than an illustration of a very important truth concerning the mystery. Onesimus is a type of the ten tribes of Israel, who ran away from the Lord. He corresponds with the so-called 'prodigal son,' who ran away from his father and, in his wanderings, like the ten tribes, comes into contact with the Gospel, comes to believe, and thereby returneth to the Lord. More specifically, I think that this Onesimus is a type of Caradoc (Caractacus), the British prince, who was in captivity in Rome in the days when Paul was also in prison. But that British prince was in reality the direct heir of Ephraim, that is, of Joseph, and thus the rightful heir to the throne over the ten tribes of Israel. But Britannia had been conquered by the Romans, the king had been betrayed, captured, and taken away to Rome. Caradoc spent seven years with his family in the same kind of captivity as Paul, 'liberia custodia.'
Caradoc was at liberty to go where he willed within Rome, and he had his own palace. In Rome, he nevertheless came to belief and received Paul. I say 'nevertheless' because a significant part of his family had already come to belief much earlier, even years before. It is all reasonably demonstrable, but it is not in the Bible. Therefore, I will let it be what it is, but that seemeth to me the only sense of the Epistle to Philemon.
Men used the Epistle to Philemon in the past to support slavery, saying, 'See, Paul also wanteth the runaway slave to return.' Thus, Christianity defended slavery.

**Colossians 4:10**
Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him;)
Aristarchus was with Paul in his imprisonment. His name is also mentioned in the Epistle to Philemon, who was in Colosse. The nephew of Barnabas, the man who at that time went on a missionary journey and took Paul with him (Acts 13:2), is also

mentioned. Of him (also known as John Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark), Paul saith just before the beginning of the second missionary journey: we shall not take Mark with us, for he disappeared halfway through our first journey. He forsook us, and then Barnabas also did not go, for he was with family. The interesting thing about Barnabas is that he is introduced under a different name and also in very different circumstances.
Acts 4:36-37
And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.
Joses (Joseph) was by no means poor, but he sold all that he had and gave the proceeds to the disciples for 'the work of the Lord.' In Acts 5, Ananias and his wife Sapphira did something similar, but that ended rather tragically. They both fell down dead and were buried because they had lied about what they had contributed in voluntary offerings. They said to Peter, 'This is all,' but it was not so. The question then is: what is the meaning of such a story? If a history is in itself incomprehensible, it is usually because there is a typological meaning behind the story, that it not only happened, but is also told to us.
Paul's ministry came forth from this Joseph, surnamed Barnabas. It serveth as a model for the actual background of the apostle Paul, who as a Benjaminite (Romans 11:1) represented the ten tribes to the two tribes, which consist of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He brought the light of the New Covenant, 'the lamp of the Lord,' into Judah, in accordance with 1 Kings 11:36: 'And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a lamp alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.' On behalf of those ten, Benjamin goeth with Judah, and ultimately it is fulfilled in New Testament times, when the Gospel must be brought to the Jews. The man from Benjamin would logically do this. Paul officially brought the Gospel from the Gentiles to the Jews. This is in conflict with what is commonly taught, at least within Protestantism.

**Colossians 4:11**
And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.
'Jesus' is a Greek version of the Hebrew name 'Joshua.' So is the Greek name 'Jason.' Here is another who is called Jesus, with the byname 'Justus,' for distinction. 'Justus' meaneth 'the righteous.' He is a believer from among the Jews. These 'fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God' are a comfort (relief) to Paul and thus a support and encouragement in practice. We know Justus from Acts 18, in Corinth.
Acts 18:7
And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.
Whether the Justus in Colossians 4 is the same as the one in Acts 18 cannot be said with certainty. But it is very possible, for there was much travelling in those days. People made intensive use of the relatively safe roads under Roman rule. It is known from secular history that the spread of the Gospel could be so rapid in the days of the apostles because one could travel with ease.
Through the naming of fellow-workers 'which are of the circumcision,' Jews are placed in a Gentile context, and so it should be. So it remaineth, and so Biblical history officially

ends in Acts. It does with the Jew Paul in Rome, in the capital of the world, and the statement in Acts 28:28: 'that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.' The Apostle therefore taketh Jews with him in his ministry from the Gentiles to the Jews. That is the reverse of what one might expect, for you would expect the Jews to make the Gospel known to the Gentiles. However, Paul taketh Jews with him and maketh them share in his own position as a Gentile bringing the Gospel to the Jews, and so it hath remained throughout our whole dispensation. The intention upon the acceptance of the Gospel was and is that one's own background, whether Jewish or Gentile, no longer plays a role. The apostle Peter, for example, had to learn that principle somewhat forcefully (Acts 11; Galatians 2).

**Colossians 4:12**
Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.
Epaphras (Colossians 1:7) was from Colosse and was concerned about, or at least committed to, the believers in Colosse, and Paul mentioneth this in his Epistle. I think that this 'Epaphras' is the same as 'Epaphroditus' in Philippians 2:25, where he is called a messenger who had come from Philippi to Paul in Rome to bring him something and to serve him. In doing so, the man became very ill, but was nevertheless healed (verses 26 and 27). Paul holdeth up Epaphroditus as an example. If one serveth the Lord, it can have great consequences; it can even cost you your life. As believers, we should not only believe in Him but also suffer for Him, and thus serve Him.
'Epaphras,' who is also mentioned in Philemon 1:23, is translated as something like 'friendly (kind) man,' and he behaved accordingly. Paul then saith of him:

**Colossians 4:13**
For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and for them that are in Laodicea, and for them in Hierapolis.
The cities of Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were situated close to one another, and had long formed a kind of community of cities. 'Laodicea' is translated as 'the right of the people,' or possibly 'a righteous people,' but that is a very positive translation. 'Hierapolis' meaneth as much as 'the city of priests.' One might consider these names as designations for the Church as such.

**Colossians 4:14**
Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.
'Luke' is here specified as 'the beloved physician.' He is evidently beloved. Some considered him to be Paul's personal physician, though that may be an exaggeration, but he was in any case a fellow-labourer with Paul. The peculiar thing is that Luke must have attended the 'school of Aesculapius' in that era and learned all sorts of practices which we in our day would consider occult, such as the laying on of hands. All medical care was under the protection of the god Aesculapius. So Luke the physician also came from that world, and perhaps now is illustrated the remarkable phenomenon that the Bible saith naught further about it, even though everyone must have known that the man moved in occult circles and was officially, a physician, a kind of priest of this Greek deity. But it plays no part whatsoever, for the man had come to believe. One wondereth

what he did with his knowledge in that field, but we do not know. I noticed upon the car of the doctor, a sticker of Aesculapius, the serpent in a small tree. He is thus deemed to be the god, the patron saint, of medicine. Aesculapius is the Greek variant of Ophiuchus, of the constellation 'the serpent-bearer.' He holdeth down or holdeth fast the serpent.

Luke is named in the Epistle to the Colossians, but a while later he is gone. In 2 Timothy 4:9, generally considered to be the last words of the apostle Paul, the Apostle writeth: 'For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, …' I think that this simply meaneth that he adapted himself to the world as such, and by 'the world' we always understand, when it is about the world, namely the thinking of man. That is what the world actually is: the philosophy of man, the religion of man, the theology of man, the thinking of man, the way in which you stand in the world and the way in which you look upon the world. If Demas hath 'loved this present world,' it meaneth in any case and in the first place that he adapted himself to outward things, to the thinking of the world, and taketh a place therein, as is also the case with a significant part of official Christendom. It taketh a place in the world, just like institutions affiliated with Christendom.

I would not want to participate in that treadmill of the world, for then you cannot distinguish things clearly. What is serving the Lord and what is running along in the stream of nations to maintain your position? I could also have named political parties. It is always a compromise, whereby one focuses precisely on the world in which they want to show their face. Preferably 'a fair shew' (Galatians 6:12), of course. That seemeth to me to be 'loving this present world.' Here, however, Paul saith that the Message is not according to man and neither is it of this world.

This cometh not from man, but from God, and to Him do we give ear. Him we love, and no compromise in that regard existeth. Thou canst not make a compromise between God and the devil, to put it in black and white.

'Loving this present world' is a serious matter, because it is precisely in this Epistle that it is about us not belonging to this present world at all, but that we as believers should 'be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding' (1:9), 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' It concerneth the practical life and service to the Lord, in which it is not the intention that we should love this present world. To be delivered from our sin, and the accompanying guilt, we have 'died to the world, to sin, and to the law,' all three at once, and that is a glad message (3:3).

The name 'Demas' meaneth as much as 'of the people.' We find that name in 'democratic' and 'demographic.' Thereafter, his name is translated as 'popular,'. That is also a designation for 'the people.' We have Demas here as an example that one should not follow. We should not seek popularity with the masses or with the people. That is nothing more than seeking world conformity (Romans 12:2) in this present world, which is ruled by the devil.

**Colossians 4:15**

Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

Not only the brethren, but also 'Nymphas and the church which is in his house' receive the greetings. 'Nymphas' meaneth 'bridegroom,' and 'Nymphe' is a bride. If those names

mean something, and they undoubtedly do, otherwise they would not be in the Bible, then if you place Demas and Nymphas side by side, you get a positive example. In that case, Demas is 'the man who sought the people' and ultimately 'loved this present world.' Nymphas, bridegroom, is then the reference to the Church. Figuratively, that is Someone who seeketh not the world, the people, or visible things, but who seeketh the Lord. For the bridegroom is Christ, including the Church. It appeareth that this brother in Laodicea is apparently responsible for the Church which is in his house. They do not live in his house, but he provideth them with shelter, at least during the meetings. Why are greetings given here to those in Laodicea? Laodicea and Colosse were close to each other. They belonged together more or less. It was actually one big community.

**Colossians 4:16**
And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.
'Written from' seems not right to me. The Apostle wrote, from Rome and not 'from Laodicea,' an Epistle not only to the Colossians, but at the same time also to the Laodiceans. He saith: make sure that the Epistle to the believers at Colosse is also read in Laodicea, and that the Epistle to Laodicea is also read in Colosse. The conclusion is then that we are missing an Epistle, namely the Epistle to the Laodiceans. That is not strange, for Paul must have written many more epistles, and we do not have them in the Bible either, just as not all of his missionary journeys are reported in the Bible. We probably do not know most of it, and what we do know is undoubtedly the most important, for that hath been preserved for us. The point is not whether we have all the Epistles of the Apostle, but that we know the full counsel of God, and for that, these Epistles are sufficient.
There is another option, namely that the Epistle to Laodicea hath another name in the Bible. Paul wrote more or less simultaneously to Ephesus and Colosse. You find the same expressions, the same subject; there is very little difference between them. The same applies to the Epistle to the Philippians and the Epistle to Philemon. They were probably all four delivered on one journey. The peculiar thing is that the Epistle to the Ephesians hath no address at all in some of the oldest manuscripts. It saith there: 'To the saints which are and faithful in Christ Jesus.' The place name is therefore not in it. The sentence is such that a place name should be in it, but it is simply left blank. The idea is therefore that this Epistle, which we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians because it is addressed in other manuscripts, was circulated in practice. That Epistle could go anywhere. The next thought is that this may be the Epistle that was originally written to Laodicea and that in the copying thereof, the name Ephesus was filled in. Whether that is really so, I know not, but it doth illustrate that the doctrinal content of the Epistle is not at all dependent on the addressees. They are often the occasion for the content of the Epistle, but the Truth thereof is not really changed by it.
The original Epistles circulated, and that is how they came to us. We truly do not have the original versions, only transcribed copies. They circulated because the things taught therein were not intended only for inhabitants of a specific place.

**Colossians 4:17**
And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

‘Archippus’ in a beautiful English word is ‘marshal,’ and less solemnly, ‘horse groom.’ ‘Arch’ is ‘first,’ and ‘Hippos’ is a horse, so literally ‘the first horse.’ In any case, he was to look after the horses, and that is traditionally a household office. A ‘stablemaster’ it is called, and the title ‘steward’ cometh with it if he hath authority over the whole house. Of ‘the ministry which thou hast received,’ I think, because nothing more is said and because we only have his name, that the man was responsible for the household affairs in the Church at Colosse. Perhaps he was what we would call the ‘sexton’ nowadays, perhaps of the place where they met, namely the house of Philemon.
Philemon 1:1-2
Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy, our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer, 2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house:
The impression is that Archippus is the son of Philemon and Apphia. Philemon was evidently not without means and had ample accommodation, which allowed the church to meet in his house.
What we learn from it is that such a ministry can also come our way and that we should bear the responsibility for it. What I always say, I can also say now, because it is also brought out in the verse. The point is not whether we want to do something occasionally, but whether we want to take on a certain responsibility for the rest of our lives. You do something for the Lord and you promise the Lord to do it.

**Colossians 4:18**
I am rather busy The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.
Paul writeth the greeting with his own hands, and that meaneth that the preceding verses were not written in that manner by him. He dictated the Epistle to someone whom we refer to as a ‘secretary.’ Jeremiah also had one: Baruch. Evidently, because of his old age, Paul needed someone to do the actual writing for him. As far as I am concerned, the whole idea that Paul had an eye ailment is nonsense. The man was simply not very young anymore, and the one who had to write it down for him must have been much younger. It was therefore not a luxury that he had a secretary, but a compelling necessity.
‘A sharp thorn in the flesh’
Of the ‘sharp thorn in the flesh’ of Paul (2 Corinthians 12:7), it is said that this must have been a physical ailment, and thus it must have been his eye ailment. That is even a very persistent story, but I do not believe it. That ‘thorn in the flesh’ was not some kind of disease; it was those Corinthians. Let one read 2 Corinthians 12, in the KJV is headed: ‘The heavenly vision and the thorn in the flesh.’ Paul explains that he ‘heard unspeakable words.’ Not because he could not ‘technically’ speak them, but because it was not lawful for him. He was simply not allowed to tell what he had heard and seen when he was ‘caught up to the third heaven’ (Verse 2).
From whom was he not allowed to tell it? It is said, or assumed, not from the Lord. But if one readeth the expression in the context, preferably in the whole of the Epistle, then we know exactly by whom it was not permitted. The Corinthians did not want that. The Apostle's complaint in both these Epistles is that those Corinthians would not listen to him, while Paul had such beautiful and wonderful things to tell. They did not want to hear him and had no interest in his message. They had, just like Demas, ‘loved this

present world.' That is politely put, for in reality, they 'walked after the flesh.' For that reason, they therefore had no interest in heavenly things, and therefore also not in the man who was driven to tell them the heavenly things.
2 Corinthians 12:7-9
And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
Paul felt weak and prayed three times for this to the Lord. Now, I know some who would immediately say that is far too little. But after asking three times for the same thing, the Lord answereth: it is well, My strength is made perfect in thy weakness.
In verse 14, Paul writes to the Corinthians: 'Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you …' In verse 8, he wrote: 'For this thing I besought the Lord thrice …' So he prayed each time he was ready to go to Corinth, so that he could personally tell them what the Lord had revealed to him. What did he pray for then? This: that he—who was weak—might receive strength. And then the Lord said: thou shalt remain weak, but I shall do it.
The apostle Paul was, in the wilderness in Arabia (Galatians 1:17) on Mount Sinai, where Moses and Elijah, and also the Lord Jesus, had previously been instructed by God Himself in matters pertaining to the New Covenant. I think that Paul saw the same things as Moses, but he was not allowed to talk about them, but he was allowed to represent what he had seen. That was New Testament truth and therewith Church truth. The Old Testament things, especially the ceremonies, give expression to that in advance. Paul useth those expressions, particularly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to elaborate on what it all meaneth. How doth Paul know that? Because he hath seen the original. That is not to be found at all in the other apostles.
But Paul therefore had a problem: 'a sharp thorn in the flesh,' that is, 'a messenger of Satan.' In any case, someone who hindered what he had to say. Nobody wanted to listen. He had a great message, but they did not want to hear it. At least, the Corinthians did not. Not only in 2 Corinthians but also in the Epistle to the Galatians.
Galatians 3:1
O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
Believers still allow themselves to be placed under the law, while Paul was delivered from it and had seen the reign of grace expressed. But they will not listen. That is 'bewitched,' and that is for Paul 'a sharp thorn in the flesh.' That is the reason why he asked for prayer in Colossians 4:3: 'Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.' For it is not easy to tell these kinds of things. If what is said is not an immediate solution to today's problem, then most people are absolutely not interested. That entails they are not truly occupied with the Truth and with heavenly things.
2 Thessalonians 3:1-3
Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

Not everyone as written touching the believers, is faithful to ‘the Word of the Lord,’ it saith here. They tag along, they attend the meetings, they want to do something now and then and are also still enthusiastic, but they nevertheless live very superficially. You can tell them the same truths repeatedly, without it helping, because it doth not work. That is not due to the Word, nor to the messenger, but to the disposition. People have other interests; they seek other things. Therein lieth the problem, and with that ‘thorn in the flesh,’ Paul hath to deal. He must speak to people of whom he knoweth: they do not want it. At the end of his Biblical career, he complained about that. No one is with him anymore (‘… for all men have forsaken me …’; 2 Timothy 4:14). Moreover, he saith that he is actually no longer welcome anywhere, not even in the churches that were founded by his own evangelistic work.

Evidently, the Apostle felt limited in his actions and in his preaching. He hesitated to speak certain things that he nevertheless must tell (1 Corinthians 9:17). Paul needed boldness to say what he believeth he must say based on the Word of God. That you find throughout the entire New Testament. Peter saith in his address that it is lawful for him to speak (Acts 2:29). Boldness to speak is necessary in order that the Word of God ‘may have free course.’ I think this is directly related to the expression ‘Remember my bonds.’ These are not literal shackles, for he had none or hardly any.

Verse 18, the last verse of the Epistle to the Colossians, concludes with this great Truth: Grace be with you. Amen.